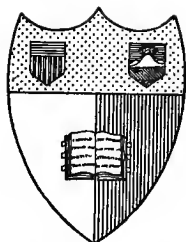


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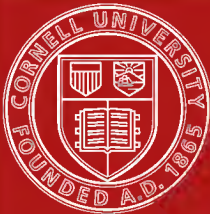
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**TO MY
WIFE AND MOTHER**

PREFACE

IN the sketches and studies of which this book consists, I have examined a number of reputable British institutions. I have ranged from John Bull, his wife and children, to the houses in which they live, and to sundry public bodies which are supposed to serve them. As we do not live alone in the world, I have taken a glance at Ireland, and have, when necessary, extended my survey to other lands. I have also had a few words to say on certain persons to whom in the recent past we looked as leaders of reform, but who now seem to be speaking to audiences which no longer exist.

There have been many books about war, but this is a book about peace. I have, therefore, tried to make it a cheerful book. It will not, however, add to the gaiety of those who believe that an armistice and a treaty have made everything right for us, and that there is now nothing for them but to return to their sofas. Persons, traditions, and institutions, once very useful, must now either be abandoned or radically altered. To cling to them when their use has

vanished is to invite revolution, and to use them as the basis of reconstruction is to build the new State upon sand.

A desire for new things is plain in many quarters.

Never came reformation in a flood,
With such a heady currence, scouring faults.

The mere fact that a thing is and has been seems to be taken often as reason enough for its abolition, yet side by side with this spirit, popularly called Bolshevism, exists a still powerful disposition towards reaction. Some are for putting the clock forward, some for putting it back; few seem to know or to care what the right time may be. War has made most people violent. At the risk of being out of fashion, I remain impenitently moderate. I confess to a certain dislike of things as they are, yet when I come on various fragments of the old world, such as a church, a comedy by Mr. Shaw, or a tavern with idolatrous literary associations, I am anxious not only that it should be preserved, but that it should be taken out of its lavender and brought forthwith into daily service.

Of all people, the English know themselves the least. They have not the habit of self-

P R E F A C E

examination, and they may, in consequence, be a trifle annoyed when I hold up a mirror to them. The qualifications I claim for the task are that I was born in William the Conqueror's old duchy, that I have several dashes of Irish blood, and that I have recently passed a couple of years on active service abroad, there enjoying a chance for reflection on many things which in the common hurry of existence I had previously taken for granted. For the rest, I can only advance the facts that I have lived most of my life in England, and that, like the obscure Peter Pattieson and other persons even less notable, I possess "the usual allowance of visual organs."

Most of the following articles, in whole or part, appeared in *Everyman*. My warmest thanks are due to the editor for the encouragement he gave me in their production, and thanks equally warm are due to the friend who first made me known to him. One article, in a slightly shortened form, appeared in *The Outlook*.

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ABOUT IT AND ABOUT

THE BRITISH MATRON

THAT the people of England have too good a conceit of themselves has often been alleged by their neighbours of Wales and Scotland. They are said to have a habit of calling English many things which can only be properly covered by a wider adjective. They talk of English literature, or England's effort in the war, as though Sir Walter Scott had never written and there had never been a Mr. Lloyd George. As my place of birth was in the Channel Islands, I have examined the matter in a neutral spirit, and have come to the conclusion that the charge is ill founded. The more inclusive word is, I find, freely used for those institutions which seem most to have a quality of permanence, and in which, despite an occasional grumble, the greatest pride is taken. Invariably, one hears of the British Navy, the British Constitution, and the British Workman. To the soldier this term may be

less commonly applied, for the simple reason that in normal times the English do not think about soldiers apart from a few regiments such as the British Grenadiers. Of literature they seldom think at all.

With the ground thus cleared, I venture to approach the British Matron. She, also, has been regarded as of the immortals ever since she first appeared among us, though from the silence of certain old writers one must judge that she was not always with us. Perhaps the first positive reference to her is made by Thomas Morton when, in *Speed the Plough*, he mentions her as Mrs. Grundy, a name which was to be remembered long after the rest of the author's creation had passed from memory. Frequently she has been reviled, but always she has stood her ground, and so has won a right to our consideration. "Who would not fall, with all the world about her?" Ben Jonson, who knew her not, yet may have had some faint prevision of her coming, provided the words for her answer: "Not I, that would stand on it, when it falls." Yes, and if my estimate of her be correct, would even give it just one more downward push in honour of her own upstanding virtues. She would do it, too, as

THE BRITISH MATRON

she has done so many other things, for the sake of example.

Her period of least questioned power coincided with the first fifty years of Queen Victoria's reign, and her pride is that in that age were women respected as they never have been respected either before or since. She says that she made the home her sphere, and was supreme in it, which, of course, is true, since the husband, having taken refuge at his club, did not dispute her supremacy. She claims to have been the mainstay of the Church; vicars whom she intimidated and curates whom she patronized both admit her claim's validity. With her daughters, her endeavour was always to bring them up so that they should become as she was, and to marry them at least as advantageously as she had been married. Here, by the way, an interesting fact of natural history^r emerges. No perfect specimen of the British Matron is known to have been without daughters. The fully developed stage has never been reached by a woman who had sons alone. It looks almost as though Nature, in her constant effort for economy, will waste none of her gifts on those who are not going to transmit them to another generation. The only other explanation is

that the British Matron could never come to completion save by perpetual practice in her favourite occupation of being a model to others.

In housekeeping, as an end and aim in itself, quite apart from what it might produce in the way of comfort or æsthetic satisfaction, she believed firmly ; yet, unlike her German sister, she did not always have her girls thoroughly trained in it. If she chanced to be a Countess, she possibly had them taught to make butter or something which would be similarly useless, and, therefore, piquantly ornamental, in any state of life to which they were likely to be called. In any less aristocratic stratum of society she pinned her faith to such accomplishments as acquaintance with the plays of Bowdler or with the musical glasses. These traces of inconsistency may be more apparent than real. She educated her daughters for marriages, not for married life. There were several things the details of which she held it would be better for them to find out for themselves, and housekeeping was merely one of them. With certain general maxims she did, however, provide the dear children. One was to distrust their servants ; another was to be guided by their husbands on any point where resistance might mean an

T H E B R I T I S H M A T R O N

open rupture. Married lives, she reflected, were much of a muchness as long as there was no disparity of incomes. Her girls would be able to judge how she would have comported herself when their times of trial came. Confident that she was the cynosure of all eyes, she was sure that every right-minded woman would be wishful to mould herself on the pattern she presented.

One knows fairly accurately what were her ideas on art and politics. She liked members of her family to have good looks, and thought that people in her own social station had a duty of dressing well. Beauty she distrusted. When she suspected it in her kitchenmaid's fringe or in a painting of the nude, she immediately wanted it to be abolished. Of course she desired her daughter to have accomplishments, but they and that art of which people raved in Paris and elsewhere were, thank goodness, two different things. Nevertheless, her annual tour of the Royal Academy showed she was not intolerant. Sometimes she had found it not unpleasant to meet at dinner a painter or writer, but, if she mentioned him afterwards in her own circle of friends, it would be with a meaning smile as though she had to record an encounter

with a very intelligent Samoyed or a well-spoken Bashi Bazouk. Of all foreigners she was doubtful, being persuaded that their morals were inferior to their manners, and what so often induced her to send her girls to school among them I cannot divine. It would have seemed wrong to her if Olive and Mabel had not known the French language, but it would have seemed worse had she found them studying French literature. Patriotic she certainly was—a very Britannia in a sealskin coat—but the intricacies of home politics did not interest her greatly as long as nothing was mooted which could interfere with her status. She knew it was absurd to talk of raising others to her level, and criminal and yet more absurd to talk of bringing her to that of anybody else. Nonconformists she must have disliked. She had nothing specific against their religious tenets, but she had never lost an opportunity herself of conforming to everything that was established.

“Cant and inconsistency,” wrote Max O’Rell, “are the characteristics of the British Matron,” but he was a Frenchman, and could not have been expected to like her. She had the virtues of society, and they, as Emerson said, are the vices of the saint. The real question is whether

any man liked her, and whether, at her prime, her sex was as honoured as her defenders would have one think. Light on the subject may be thrown by a glance at some old volumes of *Punch*, that sure index to the opinions of the middle-aged middle classes, amongst whom, if anywhere, she was revered. I can see Thackeray having an eye on her when he writes of the Parisians and their dramatists "joking against marriage ever since writing began," and, again, when in a burst of exaltation he draws the obvious comparison: "We will laugh in the company of our wives and children; we will tolerate no indecorum; we like that our matrons and girls should be pure." Yet, in the same publication, Jerrold and Leech were all the while engaged in vulgarizing the married woman. They may not have joked against marriage; they certainly joked most cruelly about it. By every means they had, they made the married woman look ridiculous, and half their humour was spent on showing how tiresome she was to her husband. They spared her at no hour of day or night. Leech, whose "truth, fun, beauty, and kindness" Thackeray had extolled, was never kind to her. About her bedroom he scattered her wearing apparel, and every article

of it was frowsy and indescribably repulsive. Perhaps it was all quite decorous ; emphatically it was not aphrodisaic.

Never, I am afraid, was the British Matron popular, and her influence for good has been too often over-rated. In the improvement of manners she may have had a part, but in the history of morals she is negligible. I have written of her as though she belonged to the past, but I know that though she does not belong to our age she is still in it. Every few weeks she writes to the papers about some breach she has espied of the Grundified conventions. Might one ask her, as Martial asked Cato, "Why did you come to the theatre ? Was it only for the sake of going out ?" The question would be useless. She has not to enter public places to find impropriety ; since her reign is over, she knows it must be there. She has a *flair* for it. At times one feels that she may yet do some good in the world, but the worst of it is that she so seldom lights on the things which most need to be mended or ended. Poverty and cruelty have strange ways of escaping her vigilance. Vulgarity she often passes unheeded. What really rouses her to action is the idea of people, and particularly poor people or young people,

THE BRITISH MATRON

enjoying themselves in ways she never knew or has forgotten. They are not following her example. They are doing something new and different, and against that sort of thing she always has, and always will, set her face.

JOHN BULL

WHEN Barnaby Rudge and his mother were journeying to London, they met on the way a stout man with a long whip. This individual's name has never been revealed, but among his friends he had various endearing appellations. He was variously styled "a country gentleman of the true school," "a sporting gentleman," "a thoroughbred Englishman;" others called him "a genuine John Bull." These were several ways of describing him, but on one point all his admirers were agreed. They united in saying "that it was a pity there were not more like him, and that because there were not, the country was going to rack and ruin."

This same sentiment is still occasionally expressed. Some while ago John Bull left the shires to become a townsman, but it made no great change in him. His sporting instinct remained as strong as ever, even if he had to indulge it vicariously. His belief that money could buy everything, exemplified by his rage when Barnaby would not sell the raven, did not diminish but, if anything, increased. His

manners, brusque to the verge of coarseness, did not improve, and his antipathy to strangers did not lessen.

Why there should be complaints of his rarity, I do not know. My own object in writing of him is to ask that he should no longer be taken as the representative figure of England. Openly or secretly, we are all ashamed of his graceless and unsocial ways, and our confidence in his bluff virtues is waning. During the war, his ebullitions seemed either excusable or negligible. Mr. Bottomley, who claims to be his complete and latest embodiment, added not a little to our gaiety in the dark days, and created annual merriment by his predictions that we should all be home for Christmas. His visit to the front, and his adventures there, were voted by the Army to be the best jokes that even he had so far perpetrated. "We read him," one soldier said to me, "not because we agree with him, but for the sake of a good laugh," and just then it would have been hard to give a better reason for reading anything. At the same time, one could be uneasy at the thought of his paper in the hands of foreigners who might not understand our sense of humour. Mme. D'Arblay once remarked that it was ever a

John Bullish trait to fight with better will than justice, and Mr. Bottomley trampling on the ideals of the Allied cause was a disconcerting spectacle for those who did not know how to discount him with laughter.

The time has come for a new standard of humour, and John Bull's sallies are now only obnoxious. His old abuse of the Boche was not free from vulgarity, but one scarcely demanded niceties of speech at such a time and with such an opponent. Something, though not everything, was to be said for fighting the foe with his own weapons, but it is not so easy to find an excuse for Mr. Bottomley's more recent vituperation of our Allies. To tell us that America is the new enemy, and that he hopes she is in for "a good, strong taste" of labour troubles, is tactless. Rather worse was the vote against the French pilots. When we hear from the same source that an ambassador able "to stand up to President Wilson" is wanted for Washington, we begin to wonder whether the Member for Hackney would prefer that post to the directorship of peace propaganda of which he talks so often. When he refers to Lord Robert Cecil's hope that public opinion will become the arbitrator of international differences, and sums

it up as "nonsense," I am left debating which position he would most unsuitably fill. His description of the rights of small nations as "copy-book piffle" is, of course, what one would expect from the man whose "To Hell with Serbia" once adorned the London hoardings. His triumphant declaration that we no longer hear anything of "Wilson's idealism and the Fourteen Points" is, on the other hand, nonsensical enough to be surprising. As a matter of fact, some of those points are as ubiquitous as King Charles's head, but even if one did not hear of them, it would not matter. For the past month nobody has mentioned in my presence the Norman Conquest, the forty-seventh proposition of Euclid, or the Copernican system, but I am sure I should be wrong if I interpreted this silence as meaning that I could frame my future conduct on an assumption that these things had ceased to influence me, my country, or the world.

Having fought for justice in partnership with more than half the civilized nations of the earth, we now have leisure to consolidate our friendships. I agree with Mr. Bottomley that there is need for peace propaganda, but his plan for introducing the British bootmaker to the foreign

tailor will not promote cordial relations. “Kick them out and keep them out,” as the foundation of our foreign policy, can only result in much cry and little wool, though a certain amount of cotton wool may be required to staunch wounded feelings. As an alternative we might cultivate decency of manners. The French and others do not relish being called aliens, and though it be a small matter, we might humour them on it. We might issue a manifesto expressing a hope that several unfavourable ideas about us had been modified during our struggle to save civilization. We might even follow it by inviting old friends and neutrals to visit us in greater numbers and to see for themselves that we no longer sold our wives at Smithfield, were rather less gloomy than formerly on the Sabbath, and that we had learned to be more diverse in our culinary methods than Voltaire found us. Instead, we prepare offensive measures against immigrants who may have heard good reports of us, and surround ourselves with a wall of which the main features would gladden an old-fashioned Chinaman. And yet all human experience goes to show that a wall, whilst it repels friendly callers, has a magnetic attraction for mud slingers.

“Wut’s good’s all English, all that isn’t ain’t,” wrote Lowell in the *Biglow Papers*, and many still believe that in these words are summarized our whole national creed. The blatant John Bull who lands at New York or Boulogne as though his mission were to collect freaks, and his brother who glowers suspiciously at the rest of mankind through an opaque telescope, the while he stays at home to consume his own fog, can share the blame between them. The rest of us are amiable, but seldom audible. Perhaps the truth is that as a race we are better at defiance than defence. When some one calls us a nation of shopkeepers, we reply that we are proud of it, and promptly claim to be the best shopkeepers, though anybody acquainted with the large cities of America and the Continent knows that we are making an idle boast. Had we said that there was still, unfortunately, a lot we could be taught about shops, but that we did happen to be a nation of poets, there would have been no gainsaying our claim. In many places between China and Peru, where the name of the late Mr. Whiteley cuts no ice, one can be honoured by making it clear that one comes from the land of Shakespeare, Milton, and Shelley.

John Bull, however, will never mention a

poet, except to jape about his hair. Should he light on anybody whose interests are neither sporting nor commercial, he hastily exclaims that he, at any rate, is not a "high-brow." As to making friends with foreigners, he would as soon seek congenial society in the monkey-house at the Zoo as amongst those who do not habitually talk English. A holiday on the Continent at some John Bullish resort is, naturally, another matter, though its enjoyment may be marred by having from time to time to utter sounds in a language not his own. In such an unfortunate event, he will do his best to give them a true English flavour. French with all the vowels broadened to bursting is the furthest he will go in the way of compromise between dignity and convenience. French which more closely imitated the French fashion of speaking it would be pandering to prejudices he does not respect. But, perhaps, the part of the holiday he enjoys most is his return home when he regales his cronies with tales of the shocking things he has seen, and can hint to his women-folk of what lewd fellows those others are. If we must have an Aliens' Bill, could we not balance it by a law to prohibit any Briton from crossing the sea without testimonials from three responsible

persons to the effect that he was not likely to disgrace us abroad ?

Admittedly, there have been good Englishmen who had in them more than a touch of John Bullishness. Dr. Johnson had it often, and displayed it when he growled about the Scots invading England, but he took one of them to be his devoted friend. Cobbett almost flaunted it, but, when he saw his countrymen flogged by Germans, he flew into a temper, had a protest printed, and paid a fine of a thousand pounds for his pains. He was ready, you see, to pay for his patriotism, and did not look to make a profit from it. I used to fancy Mr. Chesterton would carry on the tradition, but something has restrained him. Probably he has noticed that the modern John Bull has a countenance which proclaims kinship with the Shylock family. This fact was impressed on me by an election address I once received from a gentleman whose name is familiar to every student of the Old Testament, and I learned from it how conglomerated greed could be disguised as love of country. "England for the Engleesh" was, of course, its burden. It is a pity that Mr. Bottomley should have picked up the mantle which Mr. Chesterton rejected, for he is a

native of this island, and, therefore, under no necessity to rant about it. Moreover, he is a kindly man. If he is not always on the side of the angels, he has always taken an equally honourable and, perhaps, more clearly disinterested place on the side of the animals. Decidedly, his heart is in the right place. His efforts to spit the dove of peace, and roast it instead of a turkey for another Christmas dinner in the trenches, can only be explained on the assumption that his head is not screwed on the right way.

THE YOUNG LADY

YOUNG ladies are said to be a disappearing class. They were exquisite upon a Watteau fan, and in the Pump Room at Bath must have been charming, but it is doubted whether there is any place for them in the world to-day. Jane Austen's schoolgirl whom Scott described as "very good-humoured, very silly, very pretty, and very much disposed to be married" was the young lady of her period in embryo, and, fortunately for herself, she never had to wrestle with such difficulties as earning a living or getting home on a tram-car, nor was she faced with the present scarcity of husbands. Some are already crying that she can be of interest only to the antiquarian. There have, it is true, been great changes, and more than a quarter of a century has passed since Mr. Miller, of Oneida Creek, wrote of "The Strike of a Sex." It is a long, long trail a-winding from Fanny Burney to Miss Rebecca West, and even in the crowd things have not been at a standstill. The typical English girl of the present moment would be more than half inclined to resent being

called a young lady, a name which, as Stevenson said, has "such niminy associations." Yet I should not like to tell her she was not one, and in my heart of hearts I question whether the alteration in her has been as great as either the optimists or the pessimists affirm.

Caught in a serious mood, Mr. Justice Darling has issued a jeremiad on the subject of young women. "It can be seen in a walk along the street," he says, "that they differ by the width of Heaven from what their mothers were." That a walk along the street should be taken to afford evidence for so sweeping a statement may seem strange to those who do not possess the judicial mind, and before endorsing it with all its implications the ordinary observer would want to follow the accused to her home, her office, and the place where she dances. One would, in fact, have to compromise oneself seriously, and one must, therefore, be content with suggesting that outward appearances are not always safe indications of a person's character or status. When I see Mr. Justice Darling in ermine, I am, indeed, compelled to believe he is a judge, but the fact that my neighbour dresses in scarlet and uses a superfluity of cosmetics does not make me confound her with the apocalyptic woman or

with Jezebel. Her appearance merely convinces me that she has a liking for bright colours and is not an accomplished artist.

Whenever a condemnation is to be made of the fair sex, it is usual to begin it with a scathing reference to the way in which its members clothe themselves. Critics are constantly affirming that the dress of our young ladies is immodest and betokens the immodesty of its wearer. Let it be granted that it reveals plainly the fact that they are bifurcated beings, whereas in days of train or crinoline it was far easier to imagine them as mermaids, creatures out of their proper element on our gross earth. The upper part of their costume tends to become as scanty as the lower, and displays at all hours of the day a profusion of beauties which more careful generations concealed until the lamps were lighted and dinner was served. Good Hannah More used to urge that, if women only knew their interests, "they would dress decorously . . . and assume modesty as an artifice; the coquet would adopt it as an allurement; the pure as her appropriate attraction." Sydney Smith, having pondered these words, replied that, if such were the truth, nudity had become a virtue, and no decent woman could for the

future be seen in clothes. In reality, it should be recognised that what women wear offers little or no indication of their disposition. Bare necks and gossamer covered calves mean nothing in particular to those who display them. One sees others who decorate themselves with aigrettes and the plumage of birds of paradise, and hang round their necks the heads and tails of slaughtered beasts as a gamekeeper decorates the door of his shed, yet they are not consciously barbarians. Quite possibly they have kind hearts, and have a real affection for a pet dog or a canary. Simply, they have not begun to reason about their dress. They have a vague, but usually correct, idea that it looks nice, but that it has any meaning does not occur to one in a hundred.

In all probability, it was Adam who thought of the fig leaves. Were one to find that the maidens of Mayfair and Upper Tooting had of their own free will adopted yashmaks and pantalots it would be rash to imagine that a reign of prudery had begun, and if a warm afternoon brings sundry damsels on to the Thames in their night-gowns it is unwise to rush to opposite conclusions. Only when a fashion or a custom has originated in the male mind can one trace

it to any deep design. The long maintained ban on smoking by women is a case in point, and its open flouting by the modern young lady shows that here at least she has gained a victory for her sex. Dispassionately regarded, it will be seen that it was on a par with the Victorian ordinance which confined female passengers to the interior of the omnibus in all its stuffiness, whilst their lords enjoyed the air on the top. If with the aid of a little fantasy one can picture Mr. Justice Darling plodding his homeward way one evening from the Law Courts, one can imagine him not a little scandalized by the number of girls who smoke openly in the streets when dusk has fallen. Maybe he would only notice their cigarettes as so many signs of the decay in public morals, but were he to speak with two or three of the crowd he would discover that others were condemning the practice for other reasons. Smith could tell him that his difficulty in obtaining "yellow perils" was largely due to feminine competition for those fragrant weeds. Jones, too, could tell a piteous tale of his fiancée's affection for yet more expensive brands, and add that her new liking for "Abdul Hamids" had in no way lessened her pristine love of chocolates. One has heard

of certain cunning savages who made eggs taboo for women in order that they might eat them all themselves, and civilized man is not in wit behind the savage, but in at least one or two small matters he has been outwitted by his sisters.

Another change alleged in the habits of the young lady is in her choice of literature. Alderman Evans, of Lambeth, who, for all I know to the contrary, may be an authority on the subject, declares that at the age of seven she begins to read the works of Mrs. Elinor Glyn. Such a state of affairs may make a moralist sigh for days when "Chapone's instructive volume" lay open on every girl's toilette table, but it has never been proved that the pages of that remarkable treatise were often turned. Sukey Saunter and Lydia Languish found more congenial matter in such romances as *The Mistakes of the Heart* and *The Innocent Adultery*, and Sir Anthony Absolute was not speaking at random when he compared the circulating library to an evergreen tree. Titles alter, but the young lady's taste in novels is little affected by years and seasons, though it must be allowed to her credit that she no longer attempts to conceal her gingerbread fiction in the cover of a book of sermons.

Sukey and Lydia were taught the virtue of concealment. Little Dorrit was told that "nothing disagreeable should ever be looked at." There was once a child who ran to her governess, and, in unquotable words, borrowed from the gardener's boy, informed her that she was suffering from the heat. "My dear," her mentor replied, "animals sweat; men perspire; but young ladies only glow." Thus, at an early age was it impressed on the small girl that she was a being Providence had set apart from the rest of creation. Though the sun looked to shine with equal force on her and her brothers, the results upon them were not allowed to be the same. Mother Nature, coarse an old woman as she might be, had suspended certain laws in favour of the daughters of the genteel, whilst, for those which, unfortunately, still operated, an elegant patchwork cloak of hushes and euphistic words had been invented. Advancing in her teens, the young lady may have found the suspensions fewer than she had been led to expect, but mother, aunts, and governess were constantly adding to the cloak's length. In the end it almost completely concealed her from herself.

"Fanny," said Mrs. General, "at present

forms too many opinions. Perfect breeding forms none." The time, one fears, has come when Fanny must form an opinion, even if breeding is thereby thrown to the winds. She must decide for herself about herself. The young lady of the past was generally content to live in a garden enclosed, taking no more than a few peeps through a chink, but she who is now with us has scaled the wall after throwing some preliminary stones over it. What she intends to do is uncertain, and her present position is anomalous. During the war she showed both desire and ability to be a useful member of society. If she wants employment, one does not wish to see her denied it, but it is scarcely fair to her at the same time to be keeping a man from his job and demanding everything but pin-money from her father. If she has decided to choose her own dresses, let her give some thought to her choice, and, if there is to be no censorship of her reading, one would beg her at once to develop her own critical faculties. Whether she determines to be a genuine wage-earner or not, to wear her skirts long or short or tight or full, to read natural history or romance, all will be well if there be some reason behind her decisions. Oscar Wilde came very near

the truth when he wrote that all that is realized is right, and that shallowness is the supreme vice.

All the young lady's past, all the past, too, of her ancestresses, is against her. An acknowledged part of her education and theirs was "to keep ideas from getting into the girl's head." She has been starved of ideas for generations, and is now trying to make her way through the world with no more illumination than that of the cigarette she has lighted for herself. Like Amy Dorrit, she may say that she requires a little time, although a learned judge, in the rôle of Papa Dorrit, frowns and looks anything but pleased. It is too late to talk of bundling her back into the care of a Mrs. General or a Mrs. Malaprop, for already she has taken a step or two into "the contagious countries." Nor is it any good merely to scold her. She has been a chrysalis, and is now alternately blamed for having emerged as a butterfly or worker-bee, with all the defects of either insect. Give her the time she requires. Perhaps she will curl up, and, in the full sense of the term, become a young lady again, even though she will have no duenna to aid her. Or, possibly, she may spread herself, and presently become a woman.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

“**T**HE world,” said Dr. Butler of Shrewsbury,
“is content with moderate acquisitions.”

Were one to read through a list of the headmasters of our public schools for the last hundred years, one would find no more than half a dozen names more eminent than his, and not one more representative. An Arnold of Rugby or a Thring of Uppingham is a person foredoomed to veneration. Their successors speak the mystic word personality, and sigh of a place that cannot be filled, but in a few months nobody wants to fill it. They continue to be held in pious memory and to be extolled on speech days, but there is comfort in the hour when in the discreet company of the common-room some small absurdity is remembered about the departed and a little, quite reverent, laugh is heard. Even in scholastic circles they can have enough of praising famous men. Hawtrey, to whom Gladstone said he owed everything, passed with the habit of quoting Homer in public and a genuine appreciation of port. Waves upon waves of boisterous athletes have rushed through

the citadel of his fine gentlemanliness. Butler, however, is still a model. He did almost everything that a headmaster is expected to do to-day. He brought his school from obscurity to fame. He increased its numbers, made his boys win many scholarships at the Universities, made Eton look to its laurels. The question of blues was not paramount in his time, but he would have been the last to refuse supply when once a demand had been widely and definitely made. He believed in making the best of things as he found them, and in the world's contentment with moderate acquisitions.

Based on those two beliefs, the public schools have stood for a century. If they have been in the family, we have accepted them. If they have not been in the family, we have striven to remedy that defect. A public school education, like a ghost either hereditary or acquired through purchase of landed property, is a hall-mark of social position. It serves, in lieu of any other evidence, to establish a claim to being of the select. The soldier who applied for a commission had the opportunity to notice the approval of his company officer if he could announce that he came from Eton, Harrow, or Giggleswick. There were varying degrees of approval, but

all were approved, and discipline might for a moment be waived in the friendly chat that followed. "Were you there with old So-and-So?" "In the eleven when he made the century against us?" "Good man!" And familiarity bred respect.

Let none deny the benefits which his public school has brought him if he has moved in the right circles. The fraternity of old boys has been a sort of mutual benefit society, even an Empire within an Empire. Whether that coterie spirit has been harmful to the whole community, and had a deadening effect on the very individuals who have shared in it, is another matter. Perhaps a more important point is whether the acknowledged benefits, including the hall-mark and membership of a caste with an entrance fee, are going to count for as much in the life of a boy now at school as they did in the lives of his elders.

At present, many are busy with talk of reform. Mr. Alec Waugh has written his "Loom of Youth" for our information, and, Mr. Owen Nares being chairman, has lectured us. Mr. Mais, who was his mentor at Sherborne, has also belaboured the system and profession he adorns. It has all been highly interesting, but

in those who can look on the public schools with detachment, it has created only the mildest surprise. All they tell with bated breath has been known for years, for such things will out despite the league of silence to which all the old boys were supposed to belong. That they should openly proclaim what everybody has muttered is almost the only remarkable feature in their campaign. For the rest they are zealous reformers, loving what they would correct, and quite unaware that they are dealing with a phantom, that is to say, with something that is incorrigible though it may be exorcised. If they succeed in grafting on their disembodied spirit a few odd slices of human flesh, they will have accomplished as much as they seem to desire, but we shall not mistake the patched apparition for a human body.

The truth is that they are taking their public schools too seriously. None of our reformers has been particularly helpful. Some fourteen years ago a well-known dramatic critic, disguised under the name of "Kappa," wrote an indictment of the existing system in a book entitled *Let Youth But Know*. It was whispered that the writer's son had recently failed to make a "first" at the University, and one surmised that the attack was partly self-defence after young

hopeful had failed to give convincing proof of inherited abilities. The book, however, contains some sound ideas, and it served to set rolling a ball which has ever since been kicked vigorously, if not always accurately, by Mr. Wells. In *The Undying Fire* one can note that he has done with mechanical science. Once he believed in salvation coming with the aeroplane, but when the aeroplane came it dropped bombs over London, and the effect on him was almost as disgruntling as was the Oxford honours' list on "Kappa." Mr. Wells has changed his curriculum. We are to have world-history and logic now. Splendid: especially if we have them again to-morrow.

What we have begun to feel is that our civilization would not be seriously incommoded if the public school system as we have known it were to cease forthwith. In the great period of the classics, when masters pored over the humanities and were not expected to enter the Rugger scrum, that might have meant the end of scholarship. The same objection cannot be advanced to-day. Long ago it was decided that the old pedant, with all his store of meticulous and often beautiful knowledge, must make way for an instructor more vigorous and a shade

more practical, and scholarships rather than scholarship became the end in view. Lately, too, we have made some strange discoveries. We have found that men who know not the "exact languages of Rome and Greece" can produce English poetry. Others who never learned to wield the cane as prefects have shown capacity as leaders of men. The Eton and Harrow monopoly of Prime Ministers has been broken. Neither art nor science would greatly mourn were the public school ghost to be finally laid. Of course, the old public school man is acknowledged to have a nice taste in dress, and would never commit the solecism of wearing a white tie with a dinner jacket, or flannels and brown boots with either, but I would put it to any parent that an hour's private tuition with a good tailor or waiter could set a son on the right path with some saving of expense.

Athletics would, perhaps, suffer from the change. I am told that we simply must teach lawn tennis at our schools if we are to hold our own against the Czecho-Slovaks, but I am not wholly convinced. Is it not possible that the game is popular just because it was never made a monotonous task? Fielding once wrote that public schools were the nurseries of all immorality,

and the charge, invariably contradicted by those who ought best to know, is still from time to time repeated. For the sake of avoiding argument let it be agreed that things have altered for the better, but it remains that virtues are harder to reform than vices. The cult of play is a joyful thing, and the cult of athletics healthy. Since Cleisthenes won the chariot race as champion of the gods in the Pythian games it has always seemed that prowess in sport is in itself somehow virtuous. But its modern votaries have grown either hysterical or pompous. One remembers a chapter in *The Hill*, where Mr. Vachell's ideal house-master is so overcome by excitement that he dare not watch the close finish of a cricket match. The incident was no novelist's exaggeration. The author had in mind "Bob" Grimston, a real Harrow master, who found his nerves untrustworthy on such occasions.

In a recent work on education Dr. Lyttelton made the rather obvious statement that it was a mistake to suppose masters had not as many faults and failings as their fellow men. True enough; but it is not their faults which have brought their work to its present pass. Rather one would blame their colourlessness than any scarlet sin. If one consults *Who's Who* for

particulars as to the headmasters of our leading public schools, one sees an alarming sameness in their tastes. Golf, cricket, fishing, and mountain walking occupy the leisure of most. Their eccentricities are rare and small. He of Uppingham ventures to belong to the National Liberal Club, and he of Sherborne has edited Wordsworth, which is about as far as a headmaster can be expected to go in English literature without positive loss of decorum. Yet one could wish that two or three of this careful company would do something dangerous enough to save one the trouble of searching works of reference for elementary information as to what they stand for in the world.

Maybe they stand only for the public school system, and there would be no collapse of education were most of them to go with it. A little confusion at first; a good deal of re-arrangement afterwards; at least a new hope born. The gain might well outweigh the loss. It might be found that they were no more necessary to the British Isles than were the Hapsburgs to Europe. Educational leaders would, perhaps, arise with a clean slate to use, and write on it the lesson that mediocrity must no longer content us.

Meanwhile, the final confession of the public

schools' impotence as an agent in forming character has been published by one of its unsuspecting champions. A certain Mr. E. C. Arnold, long a master at Eastbourne College, has written a letter to the editor of *The Observer*. Its object is a defence of "shore shooting" against those who would have more stringent protection for bird life, but with that controversy I am not here concerned. The reason of his defence is what touches me. "The holidays," says he, "are a ticklish time for budding youth." Of games, he tells us, the boys are "a bit tired." When for a few weeks they are allowed to enter a bisexual world, he fears for them the lures of the rink and such like awful places. Hence his cry that we must not discourage their sport with guns. Seemingly, the only choice is between flesh and blood.

"The holidays are a ticklish time." The boy may be made to behave moderately well at school, but his training is such that he cannot be trusted outside the school precincts. And yet, in a year or two, perhaps in a few months, he is to be set at large.

Side by side with the bankruptcy of the old system, experiments in a new order are, most happily, being tried, News comes to me from

one school in the North where a whole form is successfully governing itself. The master has suspended his powers of punishment, and is simply a teacher. He and the boys elect "officers" to preserve discipline, and discipline is, in fact, kept by all because none wants a return to the ways of the past. There, too, it is no longer held criminal for a boy to talk or to walk with a girl in the town. Self-restraint goes hand in hand with self-reliance.

"Budding youth" is not, after, all quite the feeble article that Mr. E. C. Arnold thinks it, and that most masters make it. Co-education is almost universal in the United States, and has been tried here timidly but with good results. The faults found in it can all easily be remedied. Mr. J. L. Paton, no mean authority on education, has written that those who believed in the intrinsic goodness of boys and girls have been justified of their children. When we can rid ourselves of the incubus of the public school tradition and all its bolstering of premeditated humbug, we may finish with the unnatural segregation of the sexes, and there may be less ticklishness about the holidays. Masters may no longer have to moan that first sight of a female turns their young charges into rakes.

THE BRASS HATS

THE brass hat has gone out of fashion, and if ever it is to be rehabilitated it will have to be worn with a difference. Other cumbersome forms of headgear may for a while be restored to favour because of the pleasant hint they convey of all being well again with the world of their wearers. But no such fancy lingers round the brass hat. Its fate is sealed. Even in Whitehall and thereabouts the man beneath it walks with the air of one who wishes he were less conspicuously marked. Further, one knows that the future haunts him; he foresees an inevitable moment when grandchildren will ask him what he did in the great war. Better for him if he had been demobilized with one or two modest pips on his arms. Better if he could tell how he served as a full private, or, after mighty efforts, became an acting-lance-corporal-unpaid. Such men, he knows, will be held in unquestioning esteem, but how is he to make confession to the rising generation which will have read the revelations of Lord French and all the counter-revelations that are going to make hay

and hash of so many of the higher reputations? And then the next question: "Were you one of those who nearly lost the war?"

The declension of the brass hat has been gradual. Its final stage is reached when, in Pall Mall or Piccadily, one meets the general under whom one has served, and sees him a commonplace being in undistinguished mufti. One gives the last gasp of wonder. Of course he has always been an ordinary person with that perfectly correct ordinariness which a good public school, followed by Sandhurst, so often succeeds in creating. One had frequently suspected as much, but until the last moment remnants of awe had stayed. It is hard to realize that the arbiters of one's fate are not somehow gigantic. That is why one grows so impatient of the brass hat, for it is the symbol of a delusion.

Undoubtedly, and as was natural, the civilian public took its generals very seriously during the war, even though it only made, and consequently only deposed, one positive hero. Its caution came from South African memories, yet there was much quiet confidence. In case of a change, say Haig taking the place of French, it was commonly conceded that an Amurath had succeeded an Amurath, and little more was

said about it. If a leader came home, the official plea of ill-health was almost taken at face value. Lay criticism seemed impertinent. When the course of war did not run smoothly, the lawyers were blamed. The unknown is always magnificent, and a curtain of mystery came down like a Channel fog between the people at home and the army abroad.

At a nearer view one was less dazzled. Even in the ranks one began to doubt the omniscience of the mighty ones, to suspect that cunning adversaries could hoodwink them. The not altogether unintelligent recruit might note how his platoon, notoriously bad at drill but with plenty of brawn, was hustled off the square to dig a trench on the morning of the brigadier's inspection. Later, he observed different bills of fare for different visitors of importance as he and his fellows underwent days of special training and polish to meet their various idiosyncrasies. For one it would be all blood-lust and bayonet; for another bombs; for a third it was possible to go easy on brass and boots. Only the arrival of a strange general caused real anxiety, but even for him, as one found in time, there was a recognized dope in plenty of whitewash on the ropes put up to receive it,

and a sound brand of whisky in the mess. On all such occasions the good regimental officer bore in mind Bismarck's saying that one can do anything with children if one will play with them.

Experience of military life but enlarged one's first suspicions. Passage through a cadet school to a commission assured one that winning the war and killing Germans were not quite the only things that mattered. Long before the word "camouflage" became current coin, the British Army had known the value of the thing called eye-wash. After a time, however, one perceived new possibilities of utility in one's generals. There was never an hour so dark that the latest news of General Hunter Weston could not dispel its despondency. It was necessary to keep the troops cheerful. Had he not telegraphed to his corps the news of his glorious victory in North Ayrshire to nerve them to emulative successes? Generals, it was discovered, had interests in life which were not wholly military. Pleasant evenings, maybe, were spent in the theatre of "Le Brass 'At," where the enthusiasm of General St. John Parker, as general manager, had made the company what it was, the best variety troupe in France. It would be idle to ask whether a second lieutenant with theatrical

antecedents could not have done as well. The Financial Adviser at General Headquarters probably saved the country many millions, but he had to be made a brigadier before anyone would listen* to him. Once upon a time, when it appeared we were not winning the war in correct English, a subaltern was appointed to edit routine orders and suchlike publications, but the experiment failed. In the Army one could not with impunity weld the split infinitives of a superior.

Times have changed. Most of us are civilians now, and the civilian in us is asserting himself. The general whose nods and frowns have been a law has to submit to the cross-examination of Mr. Hogge. Every week something new arises about which the public wants to know. Slough and Amritsar and the confidential circular about strike-breaking are simply three of many instances. "A soldier," cried Uncle Toby, "is no more exempt from saying a foolish thing than a man of letters," and Corporal Trim replied, "But not so often, an' please your honour." That was the eighteenth-century view, but to-day one is wondering whether the corporal was not too optimistic. Few French officers were more respected by the

Germans after the war of 1870 than General Faidherbe, but they put down his failures to there being too much Morocco about him. About our own military leaders there is still too much India. Besides, for some years past they have been privileged to tell a great part of the nation to go to hell, and it may be that they have not quite realized the change in circumstances. In *The Devil's Disciple* Mr. Shaw wrote that he never expected a soldier to think. The war, one imagines, may have made the British people more exacting, anyhow in regard to the highest ranks.

What to do with our generals may yet become a pressing problem. Our future Army, whatever its size, will but absorb a few of them, and not many will care to descend to mere colonelcies. Hitherto there have been well-marked paths for senior officers on their retirement. The more vigorous have frequented the suitable service clubs, and in their precincts have for some hours daily resumed the authority of their rank in such matters as cuts from the joint, choice of easy chairs, and the last word in retrospective discussion of a hand at bridge. The rest have betaken themselves to Cheltenham, Bedford, and the northern suburbs of Oxford, places

where they have been thoroughly at home, and where they have interested themselves in croquet, Christian Science, and the cultivation of chrysanthemums. That men who have served their country long and well should so end their days shows no lack of dignity. On the contrary, it is the only dignified thing to do. It is the jack-in-the-box, he who will not accept retirement as something definite, who shows a petty spirit.

It is more than doubtful, however, whether the old tradition can longer be maintained. Many of our generals now are young, or comparatively young, and the war, which has taken such a toll of real youth, has made others feel far younger than they are. There are going to be generals in the City, in politics, in journalism. It would be monstrous to cavil at their invasion of civilian spheres, especially as we of late have been passing through some of their preserves, but a few words to them as new recruits might not be out of place. In the years of war all men entered the Army equal and alike. Eminence in the arts of peace did not save one from the sergeant's chiding if one marched out of step, or from universal contumely if one made a mess of the stew. It was better to

T H E B R A S S H A T S

forget what one had been. To-day the positions are reversed. Is it too much to ask our generals to forget their days of despotism, to forget India, to forget that they ever wore brass hats? On that condition, we, on our side, may be willing to forget also.

THE DIPLOMATISTS

IN the opinion of the common man, a diplomatist is a person employed to tell lies for his country. This view, like most views taken by the majority, is correct as far as it goes, but it does not go all the way. Besides talent in prevarication, sundry other qualifications have been demanded in various ages and countries. An Italian of the Renaissance wrote that a diplomatist should be well versed in Plato, Aristotle, and theology, whilst a Dutchman of the next century held that he should be rich and munificent. Ability to drink the natives under the table used to be a high credential for envoys to the Courts of Northern Europe, and youth and good complexions were advisable in members of an embassy to Catherine the Great. More recently, the late Sir Hamilton Seymour, when giving evidence before a select committee of the House of Commons, confessed that he had no idea of a man being a good diplomatist who did not give good dinners.

The good dinner theory, which really sum-

marises most of the others, had in it elements of reason, and remains in force. If polite society no longer discusses divinity and philosophy, it still likes to be entertained at meals by informative talk on, for example, polo and the ballet. If heavy drinking is no longer the fashion, a host's ability to provide a good vintage is the more appreciated, and wealth is more necessary than ever to the internal satisfaction of epicures. To the less grave, the board which is not surrounded by beauty and handsome presences, though it offer Tokay and quails in aspic, promises but a barmecide banquet. When whole countries were no more than the personal estates of their sovereigns, or even when some half-dozen semi-constitutional Ministers held mankind in their hands, the touch of Lucullus might make the whole world kin. The first league of nations was the holy alliance of the gourmets.

Considering what has been and is expected of the diplomatist in social intercourse, the £400 on which our Foreign Office insists as the minimum private income or parental allowance for its neophytes is barely adequate, especially as a first salaried appointment as "third secretary" carries with it but an annual salary of £150. Vulgar riches by themselves are not, however,

desired in the service. A "nomination" is also required, and it is laid down that a recommendation "should assume the form of a private letter to the Secretary of State, containing a few personal notes on the candidate's qualifications." In advancing the claims of young Noudelle-Gosling it would doubtless be well to mention that he would maintain that tradition of "smooth and soft manners" of which Mackintosh wrote, and to hint guardedly of his skill at cards and dancing as likely to make him popular in those circles where it is hoped he will move. No amiable accomplishment is, indeed, to be despised. One peer, who long represented Britain in Vienna and Berlin, gained celebrity as Lord Fiddle-dee-dee, and wrote operas of which some were actually performed, though not in those musical capitals.

Coleridge, when in Rome, was suspected of being an English agent, but the charge was withdrawn because it was generally agreed that the English Government sent to courts abroad none but fools of gentlemanly birth, or, occasionally, a clever libertine. If it was not a Noudelle-Gosling, it was a Lord Scampcallous. What the foreign critic did not mention was that most other States made a similar practice, and, consequently, that his Britannic Majesty's

interests did not suffer greatly. The story of diplomacy in later years does not show any notable reform. Embassies and legations are still filled by men and women of various nationalities and of one class, who form a perambulating club for mutual entertainment. Mrs. Fraser has put it on record that in Vienna there were lately four hundred families known as *hoffähig*, or presentable at Court, each so known because it could show sixteen quarterings. During her husband's official residence there, they comprised all the Austrian society she met. Never once did she come within speaking distance of any member of those outer circles which contained the capital's artistic, financial, and professional elements.

If the gentlemanly fools were not ready made, the etiquette of the service would soon create them ; yet there are no signs that the diplomatists are willing to break their bonds. When the Third Republic was established in France, they continued to throng to the entertainments of the Faubourg St. Germain, and only saw as much of the newly democratised official life of Republican France as duty required. That the *bourgeois* atmosphere of the Elysée should have been preferred to the Imperial glitter of the

Tuileries was not to be expected, but that the envoys of foreign powers lacked the intelligent curiosity to acquaint themselves with the new orientation of politics, or to hear a second side of political questions, remains surprising. The Musée de Cluny attracts one, yet life is better studied in the Jardin d'Acclimatation. A graver charge, however, against diplomatist and diplomatess is that at Presidential receptions, when they were obliged to attend, their very manners forsook them. Mme. Waddington writes in her reminiscences that their criticisms of the "dress, deportment, and general style of the republican ladies" could sometimes be overheard and always felt.

One result of the nomination and £400 a year was to preserve British support for many years for the gentlemanly races of Turkey and Austria, as well as for Germany which, though its people might seem unpolished, was prolific in producing princelings. It is difficult to forecast what is to happen in the new Europe. A fresh type of diplomatist must be evolved. Frau Ebert has the right to expect as much courtesy as was ever offered to a Hohenzollern Empress. We do not want envoys who will be paying their respects to unemployed monarchs

or dancing attendance on retired Grand Duchesses. Even the language test will have to be enlarged. Positively, it may be necessary to insist that our future representative in Petrograd shall speak Russian. That the ordinary ambassador is without the right kind of intelligence for addressing the Upsilon Sigma Alpha Society of an American university has long been realised, and it may soon be as hard to find suitable representatives for the European capitals as it is for Washington. On the other hand, if reform begins at the Foreign Office itself, it may no more be necessary to send abroad so many circulars instructing the *chargé d'affaires* to have his despatches written in a neater hand, as the officials at home are elderly and very tired.

Possibly, we, like the Americans, may decide to do without any professional service of diplomacy. "The sure way to make a foolish ambassador," said Coleridge, "is to bring him up to it." The mysteries of the chancelleries are not really so deep as Mr. Le Queux would have us think. Bismarck's offer to instruct Bieberstein in his duties was declined, the new man saying he would pick up the details as he went, and that foreign affairs had always been his hobby. Time, too, is making some of

the details less intricate. The advice of Lord Lyons to a French minister's wife, never to invite an ambassador and a cardinal to the same dinner, as neither could yield precedence to the other, was given in the ripeness of experience, but already seems to have lost some of its original importance. Cardinals and ambassadors may be as punctilious as ever, but there are now so many other people to consider.

Untrained men have proved their worth in the general scheme of diplomacy. America has been well represented in the chief European capitals. At Washington, Lord Bryce was a conspicuous example of the right man in the right place. Others, of course, have failed. Lord Birkenhead brought back few laurels from across the Atlantic, and Colonel Will Thorne was no brilliant success in Russia, but it would be unfair to say that these gifted amateurs surpassed the blunders of sundry professionals of the old school, such as the late Lord Sackville. The stereotyped training and traditions of diplomacy have not been justified by their fruits. A liberal minded, powerful, and unconventional man like Morier, a man *qui a roulé Bismarck*, is rare in diplomatic annals ; when one reads them one is reduced to agreeing

with the old Spaniard who wrote that a diplomatist could think his work well done if he had done no mischief.

Express trains and the telegraph have robbed the Noudelle-Goslings of the importance they may once have possessed. A minister to Mexico could now hardly break off relations with that republic on his own initiative because of a brawl at a dance. Even the ambassadorial dinner-table has lost its practical importance, since it can scarcely be made large enough to accommodate a whole people. Worse still, for the diplomatist, most of his secrets have become public property. It is useless for him to get up in the morning, like one of his old Austrian brothers, and say "No!" three times loudly in case he should have uttered indiscretions overnight. He, who used to resent the *Foreign Office List* as giving information to his compatriots about pensions and salaries, has read the secret treaties in the world's press. In them he has seen, too, his own death warrant. His downfall is, in a way, regrettable. As ambassador or *chargé d'affaires* he was, after all, the man on the spot. He had opportunities for knowing the countries to which he was sent, and of sending good counsel to those at home, but he missed his

chance. In taking leave of him I will quote again from Mme. Waddington : “ There is no profession so banal as diplomacy.” The diplomatist has proved her right. Nothing is left for him but his old pastimes of inventing new cyphers, which, in a year or two, are always deciphered by someone else, and collecting a few more foreign decorations before he dies.

THE BENCH OF BISHOPS

“**M**R. CRISPARKLE,” said the Dean of Cloisterham, “keeping our hearts warm and our heads cool, we clergy need do nothing emphatically.” Had Charles Dickens lived to finish *Edwin Drood*, he would have done something more than clear up the mystery of Datchery. He would, probably, have shown how Mr. Dean, walking delicately, behaving circumspectly, advanced to the final earthly reward of lawn sleeves, which in nine cases out of ten is reserved for those who avoid the error of emphasis. Passing time has done nothing to alter the value of the advice and example he gave to the impetuous Minor Canon. The history of the Church of England shows that we have had many varieties of bishops, but in the episcopate of to-day one would look in vain for many of them. Dr. Codex, for instance, has disappeared. To have annotated Aristophanes or to have Horace by heart is no longer a qualification for promotion. Goodenough, the botanist, would certainly not be chosen to fill a see were he alive in our century, for it is widely recognized

that bishops have not the time to be studious. No more can we meet a Brownlow North appointed to Lichfield at thirty by his brother, the Prime Minister, who did not expect to be in office when the young man grew older. The political cleric, beloved of the early Georgian Whigs, who could put his pen at the services of a Townshend or a Walpole, seems almost equally archaic. The gaitered contingent held coldly aloof when a while ago Lord Halsbury was seeking volunteers to line the last ditch. Apart, indeed, from the two or three rare but prominent radicals of the type of Dr. Perceval, the Anglican bishops have prided themselves for many years on being above the party hurly-burly.

Even piety is by itself an insufficient recommendation when bishoprics fall vacant. Tact and knowledge of the world are, it is said, equally weighty considerations, and were the saintly Ken with us now he would surely be allowed to end his days in a country vicarage. Several types have passed or been modified out of recognition, but one remains unchanged. The Dean of Cloisterham has become a bishop; almost he has become the whole bench of bishops. He is safe and sound; will never provoke a crisis; will match the late Duke of Devonshire

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in acting as a drag on the wheel; will by his very attitude of benign patience shame the raw, rash zealots; can be counted on to leave the Church of England as by law established in much the same outward shape as it was on the day when he was ordained deacon.

When Archbishop Manners Sutton bade farewell to Heber on the latter's departure for Calcutta he told him to preach the gospel and to put down enthusiasm. How the two charges can be accomplished together has caused surprise to some, yet the miracle has been constantly performed. Desire for this kind of ministration may explain what Sydney Smith meant when he said that what bishops liked best in their clergy was "a dropping down deadness of manner." Continued cold douches have had their natural results. Wesley was discouraged, and the Methodists seceded. Newman and Manning were allowed to go. The dignitaries of the Church in their dread of disturbance of the *status quo* could only see arson in so much spiritual fire. In times of religious stress they had little to offer but "common sense eked out with law," and the two together have never had the value of a moment's vision. They are still as cautious as ever. With-

in the last few months the Bishop of Coventry has inhibited a Warwickshire vicar from preaching in a Congregational chapel, and the Bishop of Truro has had an embroilment with a parish priest exceeding the regulation allowance of ritualism. In neither case does it seem as though any great principle is involved. It is simply to be noted that two of the clergy have stepped left and right from the *via media* which to episcopal eyes is the *via sacra*.

The middle way, it may be said, is broad enough for all reasonable beings, but, since its boundaries are unmarked, its breadth avails little. The individual parson, whose steps meander from the beaten track, may be occasionally censured, but our bishops are chary of moving from the particular to the general. Kikuyu was one of several incidents in modern Church history which should have led to a clear and definite pronouncement. On its morrow one should have known whether confirmation was, or was not, a necessary preliminary to Anglican communion. Instead, there was a tendency to hush up the business as painful. With downdrooping eyes it was remarked that "holy strife of disputatious men" had a bad effect on the crowd. The

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scene of the incident was remote. These Bishops of Rum-ti-Foo were a nuisance, and one can mark in the writings of the present Bishop of Hereford, thorough Protestant as he is, how a member of what may be called the *pukka* episcopacy can resent the incursions of missionary brethren. The Kikuyu incident, as presented in the serio-comic press, raised a laugh because the name of the place appealed to some sense of the ridiculous. It was forgotten for a labour dispute which, to quote the impartial authority of *The Annual Register*, was "of more pressing interest."

Bishops, it would seem, will from time to time allow the breath of their disapproval to stir diocesan tea-cups and even agitate the papers with a wholly clerical circle of readers, but they dread to set the Thames on fire. The elder among them can, perhaps, recall the hubbub of the Machonochie case and the disturbance of *Essays and Reviews*. They fear a repetition of such unpleasantnesses, but they deceive themselves most sadly. Almost any thing should be welcomed which might show public concern with the affairs of the Church of England, even if it took the form of badgering an evangelical preacher at the cross-roads or

rolling a high-church curate with his vestments in the gutter. However, such things are not to be.

From publicity of a sort, occupants of the episcopal bench do not shrink. At the present time people appear to be considerably interested in spiritual matters, whilst the bishops have the air of caring for almost anything else from boxing to the birth-rate. One of their number is almost sure to rise to the bait if Lord Northcliffe or one of his editors wants an opinion expressed on the morality or otherwise of the fox-trot, or a voice authoritatively raised about Lady Godiva's dress in a pageant. In any such stunt a bishop can be counted on to make a useful move, but, in the unlikely event of a reporter being one day sent to an episcopal palace for a pronouncement on a point of doctrine or an application of canon law I think he would be sent empty away. The ethical significance of the barmaid is a subject fit for the highest ecclesiastical treatment, but such a question as "Do the dead return?" is left for discussion to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mr. Wells.

In the last century Anglican churchmen saw dangers coming from Nonconformist growth, Roman inroads, or advancing science. These

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alarms are forgotten, and the trouble is recognized as internal. Like the heroine of a mid-Victorian novel, the Church is said to be going into a decline. In hope of arresting the malady, a little fresh air has been recommended and the "Enabling Act" has received the Royal assent. It is not a very brave measure, but, with a trifle of optimism, one may see in it a promise of better things to come, especially if one takes it in conjunction with the Bishop of Peterborough's recent statement that the *status quo* is too heavy a price to pay for establishment.

When archiepiscopal and episcopal minds are found to be busy even with the mildest reforms, there is room for hope that the younger clergy, as well as those veterans who have contrived to keep their zeal undamped, will be up and doing. Lord Haldane, somewhat curiously for a man of his political tradition, has warned them against taking a step towards disestablishment, but the dead weight of Erastian opposition may yet induce them to take two. Mr. St. Loe Strachey, a more obvious adversary to reform, himself owned that rejection of the "Enabling Act" would be followed by a secession, but, like the fabled kitchen maid, he apologetically added that it would only be a little one. Little or

big, this is no time for churchmen to be talking of withdrawals. If past example goes for anything, it shows that a seceder is usually the man who cannot be spared.

Courage is, and long has been, the thing needed among the higher clergy. Of several other qualities there is enough and to spare. The Primate, for instance, is a statesman who would adorn any Cabinet, and, did he not occupy the chair of St. Augustine, he would be well placed at the Foreign Office. As ambassador from one Church to another, he has visited Scotland and been welcomed as *persona gratissima*. The most accomplished diplomatist, however, is bound in the end to fail if he has not the nation behind him, and it is unfortunately true that the Anglican Church is no longer an important factor in the life of the people. Respect for it has become a matter of courtesy rather than of conviction, whilst interest in it is a minus quantity. Its most devoted members confess that it is crumbling, and deplore its present condition the most loudly, though they as often declare that by this means or that it is being set right. Outsiders feel that they can have too much of a house that is always being put in order. The perpetual presence of plumber and decorator

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offers poor inducement to the wanderer in search of a permanent home.

If anything is to be saved, a drastic policy must be adopted. What is to be done must be done quickly. In the country at large there is no enmity to the Church, and opposition to a really boldly conceived plan, designed to secure the ideal of a free Church in a free State, would be negligible, but the Bench of Bishops with its divided counsels and its makeshifts will receive no wide support. The "Enabling Act," despite the hopes founded on it, will fail of its purpose because it is too much like an effort to get the best out of two worlds. In some particulars it is not straightforward, and, though it hints penitence for an Erastian past, it is a riddling confession which can only expect a riddling shrift. "The Church of England," said John Inglesant, "is a compromise," and compromises the English race is said to love. It would be nearer the truth to say that it is very patient in tolerating them.

THE PRIMROSE LEAGUE

TORY DEMOCRACY is one of those political possibilities to which for several generations men have looked with recurring hope. Its programme is always attractive. It promises reform without faddism; conservation without anachronism; liberality to everybody without extortion from anybody; evolution without tears. It attracts almost all the clever young men in whom socialism has not been born with original sin. In every new Parliament a group of members, said to be inspired by its ideals, are discovered to be the only persons in the House of Commons who really voice the aspirations of the country. Not until one begins to examine its practical manifestations does one begin to doubt.

As an example of Tory Democracy in working order, the Primrose League at once and inevitably comes to mind. Founded in 1883, the avowed object of the League is to spread Conservative principles among the working classes of Great Britain. Given an unprejudiced mind, no one can complain of this piece of missionary enterprise,

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but one or two little matters remain to be investigated. One should, for example, pay some heed to the methods employed; to the characters and records of sundry personages who influenced the shaping of the original scheme; and, finally, to those who in later days have carried on the good work.

With the foundation of this Primrose League three names are particularly connected, and of these that of the Earl of Beaconsfield is the first in fame. Everybody knows the story of the primrose having been his favourite flower, but few, perhaps, realise how providential was his taste. Whatever it may have been to Peter Bell and the poet, the little yellow blossom is to all Leaguers an esoteric symbol of Empire. Nothing could be more simple or more charming; for its five petals, not to mention its five stamens, its five-toothed calyx, and its five-valved capsule, represent in the Imperialist's language of flowers the five great divisions of the British heritage in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Oceania. To how many clod-stirring discourses has this piece of symbolism given the text!

But perhaps there were some who in the League's early days overrated the posthumous influence of Disraeli in its activities. Any study of that

statesman's life reveals his enormous belief in the political influence of secret societies; and, at least in the "Young England" period, his vivid imagination ran riot over hidden hands, Jesuits, Carbonari, and Rosicrucian survivals. Whilst the Primrose League was yet in its infancy, a Roman Catholic bishop solemnly warned his flock against joining the new and dangerous association, and it took a ducal patron to convince the worthy prelate that he was not faced by an English edition of the Mafia or of the Fenian Brotherhood. Spread of Conservative principles amongst the working classes was not to be accompanied by armed risings of the peasantry in defence of manorial rights, nor even by holding up to ransom the radical grocer. The young Disraeli might have played gleefully with such romantic ideas, but the League itself was to be nourished by men of another stamp.

Credit for the original plan seems to have been due to the late Lord Glenesk, for in the first place it was mooted in the *Morning Post*. What that newspaper had to do with democracy it would be hard to say, but of its changeless Toryism there is no doubt. Perhaps its proprietor saw in the Orange Lodges of Ulster a

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working model on which the proposed habitations could be formed, and perhaps he reflected comfortably that the strong, raw spirit called Boyne Water was little to the taste of English people. However well the British Unionist is pleased with his friends across the water, he is yet better pleased that the water is between them. Anyhow, tea and small beer have always been the accepted beverages of the Primrose fête.

For the League in its completed shape one has most to thank Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, a man of mischievous humour and a political diplomatist who made no secret of his cynicism. Under his care and with the aid of a number of ladies, mostly of title, the Glenesk idea came to maturity. Honorific distinctions were devised with prodigality, and brought within the reach of the most modest purses, though not with the foolish lack of discrimination which tends to make Lord Chancellors as cheap as sprats. A duly ordered hierarchy was planned. The Associates were ranged, humbly yet honorably, beneath a Jacob's ladder, at the top of which gleamed the Grand Master himself. On the rungs were Knights and Dames of various degrees. Wonderful possibilities existed. Who, looking

upwards, could realize unmoved that one day he might become a Knight Harbinger?

Badges, brooches, and other articles of inexpensive jewelry were brought within the reach of members, and served for something besides personal adornment. They were talismans opening gates to their privileged wearers on suitable occasions. At the annual picnic in my lord's park, for instance, where the speeches were followed by the swings and roundabouts, peer and farm tenants met on terms of practical equality, and even the labourer and his wife were permitted to walk round the walled gardens and see the peaches with their own eyes. Lily fingers found their way to horny palms, and an era of general good-fellowship was established even before my lady, somewhat to the relief of all concerned, had made way for the fireworks and ale.

All was excellently conceived; a place for everybody and everybody in his or her place, although the gradations, since there were so many of them, were scarcely felt. Be sure the moralist was present to dwell on the loss it would be to all if the levelling tendencies of the age were to prevent repetition of such happy days. Only a gardener or two grumbled about the nut-

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shells and orange-peel scattered by the revellers at an unguarded end of the lawn. And on the next Sunday the choir put new gusto into the singing of the hymn about the rich man in his castle and the poor man at his gate. In the towns, perhaps, the energies of the League bore less picturesque results, but in the 'eighties it was the counties that were the ticklish question, Hodge was soon to have the vote, and even the farmers were suspected of a sneaking gratitude to the Liberal Government for its Hares and Rabbits Act.

Time has brought few changes in the methods of the Primrose League or in its objects. Its members are still sworn to maintain with discretion and fidelity the estates of the realm, the British Empire, and religion. As to what religion they are to maintain there is discreet silence, but one would suspect it is the variety recommended by Disraeli—"Church and State, my boy, like strawberries and cream, always best together." If one looks to see at the head of this organization for spreading Conservative opinion among the working classes any statesman of even mildly democratic tendency, one will be disappointed. Perhaps, however, to the mere Associate or average Knight Harbinger,

there is satisfaction in belonging to a body of which Earl Curzon of Kedleston is the Grand Master and head.

Lord Curzon, too, one feels, approves mightily of the ordered hierarchy beneath him. Not so long ago the writer of this book was in the habit of dining at a club in France where that nobleman's butler acted as head waiter, and one of the latter's duties was to enforce a rule that there should be no smoking before a quarter to nine. Very well and impartially he performed his task, until one night an officer of unusually high rank lighted a large cigar on the stroke of half-past eight. Half the diners waited breathless. Would respect for rank or rule predominate? Training told. Walking solemnly to the end of the room, the imperturbable functionary mounted a chair and advanced the hands of the clock by fifteen minutes. Rank and rule had both been respected, and who could have dreamed that it could have been otherwise with one who had served the Grand Master of the Primrose League?

Long ago, one of the Victorian Tories cried that "we must educate our masters." The process of political education has now been many years in hand, though it has not run precisely

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on the lines which the originally designed "we" would have favoured. The populace has outgrown Primrose League methods. Titillation of the weaker side of human nature, the gratification of small vanities, occasional condescensions from on high, are all very well for a time, but as permanent substitutes for political policy they will not do. Moreover, the Order of the British Empire has weakened the Primrose League's first attraction. Mr. Lloyd George's Government has paid the final tribute of sincerest flattery to the cunning scheme of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, and in the process has hammered the last nail into its coffin.

THE TEMPORARY CIVIL SERVANT

HISTORIANS who in the future write of our own times, will wish to explain to their readers how retrenchment followed on the heels of peace. Foreseeing that they may find themselves in difficulties, I want to call their attention to a passage in *The Pickwick Papers*, which may serve them for an allegorical illustration. In that admirable work one may read how, in a moment of general excitement, Mr. Winkle once made a terrific onslaught on a small boy who happened to stand next him. Thereupon Mr. Snodgrass, in truly Christian spirit, and in order that he might take no one unawares, announced in a very loud tone that he was going to begin, and proceeded to take off his coat with the utmost deliberation. Between this famous incident and the opening moves in the economy campaign, proclaimed at Deauville and practised in Whitehall in the year 1919, the thirtieth-century Gibbon may find a fairly close parallel. When he turns to facts, he will conceivably relate how, at a time

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when the country's daily income stood at about half its daily expenditure, the Civil Service was made to cost us less by the dismissal from the War Office of Cissie Smith, aged thirteen and a half.

Cissie, thus sacrificed, obviously matches Mr. Winkle's victim. She will be regarded as a pathetic, almost noble, figure. From motives of patriotism, she was at an early age removed from school, and set to do work of national importance by piloting strangers through the corridors of a Government department. As she once contrived to mislay me for the best part of a morning, thus saving five minutes of the valuable time of a staff captain whom I desired to interview, and enabling him to escape to his luncheon, I can say from personal experience that she was an adept at her task. Many could confirm my evidence on her behalf, yet now, in requital of her services, she has been turned adrift on a world where there is no particular demand for her highly specialized skill. The need to save money being urgent, and the time of staff officers being less valuable than it was, one must not, however, complain of her treatment. Use for her no longer exists. Yet that her departure should have been made an occasion

for loud rejoicing seems to show some lack of proper and generous feeling. Are we not, indeed, inclined to be somewhat ungrateful to one and all of our temporary Civil Servants ? .

Into no profession or calling do persons seem to fit themselves more quickly or easily than into the Civil Service. Between professional and temporary soldiers there was always an unbridged gulf. The two classes did not in the least wish to be confused, and each held as firmly as possible to certain original attributes. In Whitehall, on the other hand, the new-comer made himself at home. There was something irresistibly sedative in the atmosphere. If you have ever consulted one of those booklets which seek to guide youth in choice of an occupation, you must have noted that the Civil Service is never called exhilarating or interesting or ennobling or even lucrative. Invariably it is recommended for its safety. In days before the war its youngest entrant was an aspirant for a pension, whilst even those who held its most coveted posts could not be described as of immodest means. From Whitehall windows its members must have watched a worrying world with some of that snug wonder which

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one imagines the Dormouse to have felt for the Mad Hatter.

One has heard that the air of Rome brings melancholy and lassitude to pilgrims from other climes. In the presence of the eternal, one begins to suspect that it is futile to hurry, and the permanent Civil Servant never doubted that his department would outlast most human institutions. To breathe the same air with him was to absorb bromide. During the war, the Press decided that the public was tired of King Log and desired the rule of King Stork. Notorious hustlers were introduced everywhere, and, of course, they hustled a great deal. Of the many public works they inaugurated, the future historian will doubtless remark that they may be seen unto this day, and concerning their purpose he will dispute as we have disputed about Stonehenge. Bureaucratic remains at Loch Doon will one day form an interesting subject for study, but it is hard for us to take so detached a view of these monuments more enduring—and more costly—than brass. Charitably, one must assume that at an early stage of their construction the Whitehall atmosphere overcame the hustler and he fell asleep. It must have seemed a perfectly safe thing to do.

According to all the traditions of the service, Whitehall would still be there when he awoke—and he would be there too.

Perhaps the main difference which survived between the old type of Civil Servant and the “live” man who was summoned to aid or to supplant him was that the former slept soundly, whilst the latter appeared to be a somnambulist. In no other way can one account for some of his performances. Of the two varieties the first is preferable, but the public should remember that not long ago the second was in great demand. In saying farewell to temporary Civil Servants of all grades, a note of kindness might have been introduced by recalling how eagerly their services were once sought. Not very long ago it was popularly held to be almost indecent for men, women, or children to remain in their normal states of life. If an old man placed himself at the State’s disposal and a post was not immediately found for him, national indignation vented itself in the next morning’s papers. Responding to appeals for “every fit woman,” young misses arrived from town and country to form a queue from the Houses of Parliament to Trafalgar Square. They were greeted as heroines. In those days

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the two unforgivable sins were to stay at home and to mind one's own business. It did not much matter what one did as long as it was somebody else's job, and, if possible, a job under Government.

Not all our volunteers, civil or military, were necessarily in love with the work they undertook. Some may have felt that they were doing an unpleasant duty, others have been influenced by social pressure or simple restlessness. Even the flappers did not always have the "time of their lives" as that phrase was once understood, and I know one or two of them who were glad to go home when the war ended. All, however, had not homes which could conveniently receive them, and on those "swollen staffs" there may, too, have been some men who did not feel the first year of peace a particularly good one in which to seek fresh employment. Their private concerns were no affair of ours, but we might at least have been polite to them. They entered the Civil Service in the public interest, and in the same interest they had to leave it; but it was bad manners and very foolish to represent them as so many vultures gorging themselves on the body of Sir John Bradbury. The cry of the

country in danger from a foreign enemy made many men and woman act altruistically. The cry of the country in danger of financial collapse merely makes the majority of human beings look to their own immediate security. In an ideal world where everybody had a proper education in civics, it would not be so. Holders of war loan would be petitioning to have their interest reduced; demobilized soldiers would refuse their gratuities; Mr. Churchill would have resigned his last car and taken a season ticket on the Underground. In that Utopia, temporary Civil Servants would abscond unpaid at the Treasury's first hint of trouble.

As things are, it is evident that His Majesty's Ministers must follow the example of Mr. Snodgrass and even go beyond it. Officially, they have been told to make drastic reductions in their staffs; unofficially, one or two of them have been warned that it would not be amiss if they were to retire into private life, their whole departments disappearing with them. It was even suggested that the Air Ministry might well leave the earth for its native element, and it was darkly asked whom and what the Ministry of Supplies was supplying. One must not look for too much in this direction. What-

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ever paring may be done will be done as far from the head as possible. The little girls with pig-tails were first doomed, and the slightly older young ladies, now stigmatized for their tea-swilling and cream-bun devouring propensities, are following. In due course a number of masculine understrappers of various ages will be removed. Only firmness is required to dislodge these so-called limpets. But higher up the rocks, in less accessible places, with higher functions, stronger connections, and considerably higher salaries, are the Tite Barnacles. Even those of them who have been there but a few years have acquired the old instinct of contempt for the public. Like their famous ancestor, they mention that obscure body with reluctance, and think of it as their natural enemy. They have, of course, read the Premier's letter on reduction of personnel. Being what they are, they have assuredly noted it, and one may be reasonably confident that they have had it filed. To imagine that any one of the Barnacles has taken it as a notice to quit with a personal application, is totally to misunderstand the mentality of those who have had a few years' intensive training in the great art of how not to do it. Mr. Lloyd George has already received the

Order of Merit from the King. Another distinction may yet be added to him. It used to be said that the great British Order of Merit was the Legion of the Rebuffed of the Circumlocution Office.

THE IMPERIALIST

OLD JINGO is dead. The war killed him. Even in August 1914 you could see there was something wrong with him, though he himself did not realize what was the matter. Really, though subconsciously, he was wishing we had not gone to war with Germany, for then he could have put all his energies into abusing a Radical Government which had shamefully betrayed national honour, as he had always declared that it would. The fact that Sir Edward Grey and all the people at whom he had scoffed were doing what he had to acknowledge as the right thing, upset him. Besides, he had always rather admired the German Empire with its oratorical Kaiser, its military discipline, and its penetrative and expansive ways. He had had a taste for Blucher boots, and had always prided himself on being a Teuton, and as such born in superiority to the decadent Latin and erratic Celt. Of course he was upset. Worse days came for him when people began to say that his Dardanelles policy of 1878 had been a mistake. He had not much

spirit left in him, but he continued for a while to jeer at President Wilson's neutrality. When the news of American intervention arrived, he gave up the ghost, and they covered his face with a sheet of his favourite newspaper.

Old Jingo is dead, but his ghost is with us, for it has returned to inhabit the bodies of certain persons calling themselves Imperialists. Had I the pens of Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton I might endeavour to show that Jingo and Imperialist had a common ancestry in Jewry, and that the Treaty of Berlin and the last Boer War were both due to one and the same Oriental impulse. The suggestion, for what it is worth, is offered to the British-Israel Association. For present purposes it is enough to point out that Imperialism has long ceased to be an English policy in any true sense of the word. The last places in the world of which its modern advocates seem to think are those British Isles to which, when they do remember them, they refer contemptuously as little specks in the Atlantic Ocean. In the near Continent of Europe they have seldom displayed any intelligent interest. Talk to them of, say, Esthonia, and you will find that their sole concern about it is its possible inconvenience to Germany. The

only parts of the earth for which they have a regard are those which are, or could be, coloured red on those excellent maps which one used to connect with the name of the late Sir Howard Vincent. Very nearly they cut us off from the whole of Christendom. They know no higher boast than that which announced us the greatest of Moslem powers. The Cape to Cairo railway was their desideratum; the Channel tunnel their bugbear.

It was in a spirit of high adventure that the Empire beyond the seas was founded. The Elizabethans may have been but splendid pirates and the Puritans no nicer in their dealings with Massachusetts Indians than with Irish Papists, but there was nothing in the ethics of their age to make them other than they were. Modern Imperialism has retained their defects and shed their qualities. Now and then an effort is made to revive the original romance, and at given moments it may succeed with a public that likes to be called insular and street-bred. One remembers the late Poet Laureate's lines—his only lines one does remember—in which he cheered the Jameson raiders for their riding to the rescue of the hetairai of the gold reef city. The pretence, however, cannot long

be maintained. We no longer seek El Dorado ; we have found and annexed it. We are less of pioneers and more of exploiters than we were. We no longer can go to the Indies with the hope even of making our own fortunes, though we may still assist there in adding to the fortune of some person or persons with a London office and a seat in Surrey. But, whenever there is unemployment, young men are urged to emigrate, and so the troublesome problem of colonizing England is indefinitely postponed.

The finest possibility in Empire building, the carrying of civilization to more or less barbarous races, is not one which appeals to our most vocal Imperialists, or, at leasts, as they tell us, it must be kept strictly within bounds. A certain amount of instruction they do find it convenient to allow, but they are chiefly apt to praise it when it is, as Mr. Kipling sang, "translated by a stick." A century ago we all had the same belief in regard to wives, walnut trees, and spaniels, and it is unfortunately true that a few years in India or the Tropics often turn a herald of progress into a champion of mediævalism, just as they debilitate his internal organs of digestion. Material benefits from his presence he does not grudge the natives. He protects

the wealth of some. After preliminary skirmishes, he has taught them the blessings of peace. Most gallantly he has laboured for them against famine and disease. But all talk of their further education is anathema to him.

As his chosen bard has written, "The 'eathen in 'is blindness must end where 'e began." Beyond this gleeful denial of all possibility of progress, the average Imperialist will not budge. Discuss the matter with him and he will quote scores of cases in which the educated native has been a ghastly failure, likely instancing Mr. Grish Chunder Dé of the Kipling story, though he has no need to go to fiction for examples. One knows of these calamities, and is sorry about them. He knows them and is glad. Nothing would disturb him more than the success of Mr. G. C. Dé, and the idea that the great-grandchildren of Mr. Dé may succeed sometimes keeps him awake at night.

The position of the white man as tutor to the man of colour is only beginning to be acknowledged, but the League of Nations Covenant has made it a piece of practical politics. Certain lands are to be held in trust for their inhabitants by the mandatory Powers. The arrangement is temporary. Tutor and

trustee are to retire when their work is done, and it is surely implied that they are to do all they can to hasten that day. Everything that was ever noble in the spirit of Imperial expansion is here, but there are to be no vested interests in other peoples' property, and only a triumph when one day we haul down the flag and sing a *Nunc Dimittis*. What is honourable for us in South-West Africa and Samoa, cannot be shameful in Burmah and Egypt or anywhere else.

To the Imperialists, in whom is old Jingo's ghost, the new task is as ridiculous as novel. He retains his motto of what I have I hold, and what I have not I get. Impossible for him to see that it is a greater thing to bear a mandate from civilization than to extract the last ounce of margarine from the niggers' coconuts. At bottom he has always gone back to think of colonies in terms of commerce and of dependencies in terms of profit. For all his tall talk and telescope, he has remained at heart as much the shopkeeper as the man who has never looked further east than Whitechapel. He has been oratorical about the white man's burden. Let us see if he will lift it now with a good grace. Empire makers there have been

THE IMPERIALIST

who would have risen to the task, for at one end of the story of expansion there is the name of William Penn and at the other that of Sir Harry Johnston.

Imperialism in the countries of the coloured races was put out of court by the League of Nations. In the self-governing Dominions it is unwise to use the word too much. General Smuts prefers to speak of a commonwealth, not because he is of Dutch origin, but because he rightly objects to use a term which has become misleading. The presence of Dominion representatives at the Peace Conference proved, if proof were needed, that, call us what one will, we are a collection of Allied States of which none is willing to delegate its freedom of action to another. In the *Globe*, indeed, a shrill, small voice cried that Mr. Hughes ought to be the plenipotentiary of England, but I noticed no cablegram asking in reciprocity that Mr. Maxse should plead the Australian cause among the nations.

Of course, it is hard for a generation which but yesterday was so proud of talking of the lion's whelps, to realize that the whelps have come to maturity and may resent the old name, but the fact has to be faced. Preferential

trade in pianos will not make any difference, nor will any tinkering with tariffs deflect the younger nations from following their own commercial policy, their own military and naval policy, and their own foreign policy. We should be grateful to Mr. Hughes for having made this much plain and indisputable, for where there is no misconception there can be no misunderstanding. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's Empire with its principle of "rally round Downing Street when I am in office, but ignore it when I am out," cannot be revived. Colonies can no longer be used as pawns in party politics. Fellowship between peoples who have blood and language in common there should always be, but the Zollverein scheme was about the last and almost the worst of our adaptations of German statecraft. In practice it would have shown the British nations not united by regard for each other, but banded against the rest of the world for trade warfare. It was Imperialism in its meanest aspect, and the decrepit Jingo was behind it.

THE BUSINESS MAN

SUPERSTITIONS die hard, yet many of them, and not always the worst, have been destroyed. Of those which still partially survive none is more remarkable than that which surrounds the man of business. In certain civilizations his place has been admitted to be secondary in the scheme of things, and at times he has suffered temporary and almost total eclipse, but within memory of the middle-aged his supreme importance had until quite recently never been called seriously in question by any save professed malcontents. Belief in him has become almost the first article in the plain person's creed. In direct descent from King Midas, who when he bathed in Pactolus turned its sands to gold, his distant progenitors were in Babylon and Jerusalem in the temples. Other prophets, priests, and kings had their vogue and went, or were permitted to stay on condition they exercised none of their original functions. The man of business alone remained a sacrosanct figure with which there must be no

more than the minimum of interference. He appeared a second Samson whom it was dangerous to annoy lest he might commit suicide in a temper, destroying us and the State in the ruin his fall would bring.

Far be it from me to deny that he has done estimable service to mankind, and still serves a useful purpose in his own sphere. In Homeric times, when he was almost unknown, Glaucus gave a hundred oxen for his suit of armour, which must have been an extremely cumbersome transaction, and I am grateful to a class which has perfected simpler methods of obtaining the necessities of life. The business man, however, is not content with being the best-paid servant of the public, for even at his wealthiest a spark of divine discontent burns in him. According to Andrew Carnegie, millionaires who laugh are rare. Somewhere in them is a troubled fancy that buying and selling and all the profits thereof do not raise them quite to the old priestly or kingly level. Money, for a part of their lives, may be to them what Italy was to the company of Æneas, "that to which the rowers steered," but though its acquisition automatically gives them power, it does not in itself seem to command reverence. When their

Italy is reached, though to reach it they have hardened their hearts like Rameses and mortified their flesh like anchorites, that final reward may be denied them.

The other day I saw on a stall of second-hand books a volume called *The Romance of Trade*, and its date of publication was the year in which Tennyson, saluting the jubilee of his queen, glorified her reign for its "fifty years of broadening commerce." In earlier ages there had been attached to the business man, not exactly obloquy, but an imputation that his main object in life was to provide handsomely for himself and his family. When the Phœnicians visited our shores, the Britons knew them for the traders they were, bartered tin with them, and were more or less content to be swindled by them, but it is not thought that they dedicated groves to them. In the days of Mr. Gradgrind we did not fully grasp all the wonder, heroism, and romance, that lay hid in the building of a big business, but we were well on the way to realization. I like to think of the pleasure that book I saw and left on the stall must have given to many who from the days of their industrious apprenticeship had toiled without spiritual reward, and of what solace it brought

them in an old age which material well-being might else have made monotonous.

In its glowing pages the business man must have read much he had scarcely suspected of himself. Some awake to find themselves famous, but he, always wide awake about his own affairs, suddenly discovered that someone had added an aureole to the silk hat he habitually wore to the City and to church. In all subsequent consideration of him one has to deal, not with a common citizen, but with a legendary figure. Every ancient lore and myth has been pillaged to find epithets for him and similes for his instruments. He who was once called tradesman, and took no shame in his calling, has become knight, pioneer, and captain. If his interests lie in shipping, be sure his grimiest cargo boats are argosies, and if rails are his concern he has the pleasant knowledge that he is hero of the romance which brings up the nine-fifteen. He is the new Themistocles; if he cannot fiddle, he can turn a poor village into a great city. He is hailed as backbone of his country, and told daily what a mass of invertebrate jelly it would be without him.

Alone of the men of his time, he has established a religion in which any large number of people

believe. It is, indeed, a very ancient faith, but its wide acceptance was long delayed by prevalence of other and often contrary beliefs. Having but a single tenet, it has the advantage of simplicity. Timon's merchant put it into a phrase: "If traffick do it, the gods do it." Those eight words are the business man's *credo* and his help in time of trouble, strengthening him against every calamity that may befall. When war began, they gave him the assurance to placard his streets with the motto of "Business as Usual," and, with armies yet but nibbling at one another, they inspired him to proclaim "the war after the war," that really serious affair with trade instead of trenches to be captured, and shares and golden sovereigns instead of silver medals for the victors. Heartened by this new device, the soldiers left England. In the new crusade, "Business as Usual" was to shine for them as *In hoc signo vinces*.

The British public has a way of taking people at their own valuation if the valuation has been made high enough. One after another, the business men were called to assist in the councils of the nation. Some of their names have escaped me, but there was a Stanley who had once been something else, and someone who was

shortly to be known as Inverforth ; there was a Geddes who could run a railway, and was ready to run anything on earth ; there were others who had struck oil, sold coal, or shown financial ability in directing a group of newspapers. On the day before any appointment was made, the man in the street might without great show of ignorance have confessed to knowing nothing of the Empire's coming saviour, but, when the appointment was announced, he had no misgivings. He accepted it as a good Catholic accepts the election of a new Pope.

Only religious awe can account for the blind trust we placed in our business Ministers. If we put confidence in Mr. Asquith or Mr. George it is not because they are more or less distinguished members of the legal professions. If we have hopes for M. Paderewski in Poland, it is not because he once charmed us at the Queen's Hall. Had we reflected at all on what we knew of the class to which those others belonged, we might have decided that, however capable they were in their own sphere, it was, on the whole, unlikely they would have that breadth of sympathy and mind desirable for conducting affairs of State. Sir Isaac Harman, in the novel by Mr. Wells, is a character typical of

those who succeed in commerce and industry. "Anybody in his line of business who wanted to be generous, who possessed any broader interests than the shop, who troubled to think about the nation or the race or any of the deeper mysteries of life, was bound to go down before him." Yet, if any demurred to the new appointments, they were told that these men had made England what it was, and with that *cliché* the argument for the time ended.

Whether the business man should be held responsible for some of our present troubles is a question worth examining. Concentration on the welfare of his firm or company, with the resulting belief that volume of trade is the measure of a nation's happiness, have hidden from him much that is pikestaff plain to others. Whilst the workers were only asking for more wages, his opposition was tinged with sympathy. He and they were both in what Stevenson called the handicap race for six-penny pieces. Now, when they have won a few coins, he sees what they want to do with them. Leisure, which a French writer has styled "greatest and most beautiful of men's conquests," is what they propose to buy, and the business man, who may never have had that luxury, is uncompre-

hendingly angry. If it had been gramophones or beer or ostrich feathers, anything he could manufacture or import, it would have been another matter. Diogenes was doubtless told by his friends, if he had any, that he was a fool not to obtain better housing and home comforts from Alexander, and the same information is freely given to modern workers. Fools they may be, yet they are so many that their point of view has to be considered. Seeley, the business man's historian, wrote that war was for England an industry and the most profitable of all investments, but events have belied him. One wiser than he said that all warlike people were a little idle, and, for a nation largely composed of ex-soldiers, the captain of industry is neither the best nor the most tactful governor. Like Humpty-Dumpty, the man of business has been set in an unnaturally exalted position, but his balance is now precarious. If he fall there will be no mending him, and his will be the most lost of all lost causes. It would be a kind and wise act if somebody were to move him from the wall's top and lay him gently on the humble earth to which he belongs, and which for a while has belonged to him.

THE COUNTRY HOUSE

A LITTLE while ago the Duke of Marlborough made a somewhat disconcerting communication to the Press. His letter contained a threat. Attention of its readers was, in the first place, called to the lavish manner in which the class to which the Duke belongs had exercised the "traditional English virtue of hospitality." Secondly, one was reminded how many public services had been freely performed by that same class. Thirdly, and lastly, it was suggested that its members, to escape the incidence of taxation, might decide to quit lands and houses and to join the ranks of the idle rich. At first glance there did seem to be something rather alarming in this prospect, for few things could be more deplorable than a further depopulation of the countryside, and one had an uneasy vision of an emigrant ship conveying the owner of Blenheim and other sons of the soil to some asylum in the south of France. Reflection allayed dismay, or, rather, it brought one to see that the worst

prophesied by the Duke is already a matter of history.

The great territorial landowners, for whom alone he has a right to speak, have never been the flesh, bone, and fibre of the counties. At best they have been but birds of passage. At stated seasons of the year rural England has enjoyed their presence, but the exigencies of their lives have compelled them always to pass a great deal of their time elsewhere. May-fair and a moor in the Scottish highlands have claimed them, and there have been weeks of recuperation on blue water or in foreign parts. Somehow or other, when blinds are drawn in hall or castle and the flag no longer flutters from the tower, existence in the village seems to lose only its froth and nothing of its essence. The magnates, whose departure is foretold, have rated too highly their importance in the agricultural community. Their hospitality, to which attention has been called, has always had about it a flavour of the town. It has been an affair of invitations and set occasions, never of the open door which among your true countrymen is the mark of a hospitable house. As to public services, they have been mostly performed at Westminster, which, as they say

in Sleepy Hollow, is a very distant place, and never did much for the likes of us. In the days of their greatest power the territorial nobility was in its whiggery nearer to the metropolis than to the countryside where the king over the water was still being pledged in home-brew. To-day, its influence in local politics is largely vicarious. Even on the county bench, so long a preserve for the landed interest, its members have been notoriously prominent by their absence.

Not in Blenheim Palace or any such lordly mansion would one have sought the men who in old days were, for good or ill, moulding the destinies of most English England. In the social history of those times the houses of most account were those of the squires, they who from year's end to year's end seldom moved more than a dozen miles from their gates, had their hearts in flock and field, in rough sport, in the hail-fellowship of neighbours of their kind. "The little independent gentleman of three hundred pounds per annum," as the antiquary Grose styled him, was a salient figure in the life of the land. To the county town he went only for elections and assizes; to church he went regularly; to the ale-house often enough. Walking, as well as riding, he carried a whip

that he might smack it, and he gave warning of his coming by the view-halloo. In his young-days he was generally a great fellow with the wenches, and if he had not the Frenchman's *droit du seigneur*, that, maybe, made small difference. His literature was the weekly gazette, *The Complete Justice*, and a book on *Farriery*. With so much learning he was natural arbitrator in all disputes concerning the government of the parish.

“Alas!” wrote the excellent Grose, before the eighteenth century had ended, “these men and their houses are no more . . . the estate is conveyed to the steward of the neighbouring Lord, or else to some Nabob, Contractor, or Limb of the Law.” The American war, followed by the French war, not to mention increasing taste for luxury, meant the end of the old order. It would be easy to draw a parallel with changes in our own age, but it would be only specious. When the old-fashioned merchant or attorney bought his place in the country, he came to it with intention there to pass the rest of his years, and regarded himself as founder of a family which should take root in his newly bought acres. The latest purchasers of land are of another kidney, and their motor-cars are

symbols of their transience. Anywhere within sixty miles of a great town they are likely to be mere week-enders, persons to whom wood, arable, and watered meadow are so much pleasure ground. If their property prove, as it often does, a disappointment, they will move to another shire, leaving behind but a trail of dust.

The country house, with such occupants, may for a little while blaze with light and ring with gaiety, and the folk of the district are agreeably awed by the ostentation of wealth. The *nouveau riche*, with a weakness of which he could never have been suspected in the City, makes his bid for social prestige, and up to a point he finds his poor neighbours submissive, but secretly they despise him. One cannot honour a man who does not know a field of wheat from a field of barley, and cannot distinguish bull from bullock. Moreover, when "trade's unfeeling train usurp the land," a crop of troubles usually arises. The old squire may have been a stickler for every right given him in the faded ink of his parchments, and his interpretation of the game laws was not always wise or liberal, but he had a decent respect for such rights as law or custom allowed

to others. His successor, with character formed in the school of competition, believes in the weakest going to the wall, and has no other precedent to guide him. If he has bought the soil of a piece of common as appanage to his sporting estate, he will resent the ancient women who from time out of mind have come thither to gather kindling-wood. If an immemorial right-of-way lies through his property, he will see it only as a path for the convenience of poachers, and will put a hedge or wall across it. Should cottages, dilapidated but not necessarily beyond repair, have been included in his purchase, he will view them as so much brick and slate for the erection of garage or other modern convenience at the manor house he is renovating.

Quickly won and quickly lost is the popularity of the city gent turned country gentleman. He comes from what Cobbett called the Wen, and to the Wen he often returns, vowing vengeance against the prejudice, ingratitude, and opposition he has met in the rural community. One does not regret his going, and yet, if the country house is to be inhabited at all, who is to live there? The squireen, the original Tony Lumpkin, went long ago to happier hunting

grounds, but what has become of those who took his place? Where are the descendants of the *marchand enrichi*, of whom Montalembert, on a visit to England some sixty years ago, still could write so hopefully? Some of them, by judicious marriages and investments away from land, have joined the ranks of the territorial nobility, and as such are but half countrymen or less. Others, who had not their good fortune or wisdom, who had put their all at the hazard of harvests, were broken by the agricultural depression of the 'eighties and 'nineties. The few who by cutting down every expense contrived to hold to their homes from sheer love of them, and in defiance of every principle of business, are lonely figures on the English map to-day. A copse, a field or two, a paddock of rank grass, may be all they hold outside the house which for three or four generations has sheltered their people. Taxation will not spare them, but they will not be able to plead with tales of costly entertainment or distinguished public services. They are proud as poor, and poor as pleaders. They are those who have drawn into their shells, and they do not delude themselves with an idea that the world will be deeply moved if they perish in their shells.

Mr. Gladstone once hinted broadly that land owning was an occupation only suitable for those who did not look on it as a source of revenue, or, in other words, for those who had made, or were making, their money elsewhere. Doubtless it is suitable for them, but recent experience does not show it to be suitable for the land, nor for those around them whose livelihood, whose very lives, are in the land. Purchasers of property, even if their wealth saves them from the temptation of rack-renting, are seldom pure philanthropists. A big head of game looms larger in their ambition than a model village, and their notion of good cultivation is three-parts cover for partridges, under a tenant who uses neither snares nor ferrets. There is better hope in the farmer himself when he chooses to become landlord. If he has not the means to inhabit such country houses as those of which Mr. Galsworthy writes, nor to imitate the state of a Sir Aylmer Aylmer, he is often a man of moderate riches. Too much a materialist, perhaps, to satisfy those who have dreamed of a new dawn for "England's green and pleasant land," he will yet avoid the cruder mistakes of strange invaders. He understands the earth's nature, and has at least some sympathy with its

people. What he lacks to-day is confidence. He is doubtful about buying; doubtful about bringing up his sons in the old life. But, if the gap is to be filled, I know no other than the farmer who can fill it.

Possibly the whole of our land system will in the next score of years or so come under revision. Park and chase, woodland and wide fields, may all presently be turned into so many allotments under peasant proprietors or State ownership, and then the country house will, if it exist at all, be merely the sleeping quarters of a townsman no longer concerned even to play at rusticity. Such a change may prove to be for the greatest good of the greatest human number, but I hope that in an intensively cultivated England asylums will yet be kept for bird and beast. I hold small brief for the pheasant and none for the fox, both too long a fetish with the powers that were, but for solemn rooks, gay squirrels, and all the company of songsters I would ask protection from those who may come to work or dwell where the old house so long stood embowered by its trees.

THE RATIONALIST

RATIONALISM is a spent force. In its heyday, Lecky could write that educated people received accounts of miracles with a derisive incredulity which dispensed with all examination of the evidence. He wrote in an age which revered law and order. Sometimes he shivered at the thought of growing democracy, but the shivering fits were not so serious as to disturb the train of his philosophic thought. In politics and economics certain things had been put beyond the limits of intelligent discussion. There were the estates of the realm and free trade; there were supply and demand and the rights of property. From time to time these things might need a little furbishing, a trifling adjustment, but, essentially, they were for all time. He who tried to break through them was an anarchist. He might be sent to prison, but Bedlam was the right place for him.

Other laws, too, had been established in other spheres, and they, also, were beyond dispute. The ways of Nature were regulated by them. She was progressive, broadening from precedent

to precedent, but she did not jump. All the grave investigators, the solemn jury of the scientists, poured scorn on the suggestion that she ever had been, or could be, skittish. Noah's ark was put away with the other toys of childhood, and the old wives' fables were put into annotated editions for the use of those who would study the weaknesses of primitive humanity. If one had told the educated person of supernatural occurrences in the garden and fairies dancing on his lawn, he would only have walked to the window under pressure of courtesy, or because it is always well to humour lunatics. Inevitably, he would then have said that he saw nothing, and he would finally have lost patience if one had replied that his vision might be defective. Fairies, he knew, did not exist, and, if they had existed, it would have been necessary to suppress them as notorious violators of law and order. There was only one class of beings more pernicious than non-existent fairies, and it consisted of the fools who claimed to see them.

Human energy, moreover, had been bringing to pass things which magic had never attempted. The oldest inhabitant who used to babble of a murrain put on somebody's cow, and recalled

the incident as a landmark of his youth, had to own that in his later days he had seen stranger portents which were due neither to infernal nor divine intervention. Flame came up out of the earth. *Monsters belching smoke and sparks ran from end to end of the country. Whole tracts of green land had been turned into clinker-covered wildernesses. Rationalism, according to one of its own historians, rose with commercialism, and with industrialism came to maturity. In those years people grew like Cæsar's Germans, for they worshipped only those gods from whom they were deriving material advantage. Applied science fed, clothed, and warmed them, and lighted them to bed. It took them from Manchester to Birmingham, and was capable of taking them to Chicago. As it so conveniently solved the problems of daily life, it would probably solve the riddle of the universe when it had time. After seeing a blast furnace, it was difficult for a man of common sense to believe in miracles. What was not realized was that when he had seen a blast furnace a few times more, it would be impossible for him to keep his senses at all if he did not believe in miracles.

Such, however, was the truth. If anything,

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we have grown too credulous. A little while ago, when there was neither a war nor a strike to provide the public with excitement, the walls of a country parsonage began to exude oil. Eminent persons at once suggested this was the work of a malicious spirit. It does not matter whether they were right or wrong, nor need I more than mention that some weeks earlier I had myself identified the domestic servant with the *Poltergeist*. The notable point is that in these days people of the highest education do not reject accounts of miracles without waiting for evidence. On the contrary, at any strange happening they advance a miracle to account for it, before the evidence has even been collected.

Spiritualists have, of course, their own way of explaining this change of sentiment, but I decline to believe it due to any of their missionary efforts. Bergson, coming out of the mysterious East, with appeals to intuition on matters beyond the range of ascertainable fact, may have had a little to do with it, but not much. That Professor Planck should have breached the fortress of Newtonian mechanics is momentous, but there are very few people who know, or care, anything about Professor Planck. Success

of opinion, if I may quote Lecky once more, depends less on the force of its arguments than on the predisposition of society to receive them. In his day, it had been made ready for rationalism ; at present, it is ready for almost anything else. Science, colossal in the last century, is now recognized as a child, considered promising by some, and disappointing by others. It concocts poisonous gases, and teaches how they may be used to overwhelm an army corps. It annually advances medical knowledge, yet in the cure of human ills it does not keep pace with theoretical progress. In old days the Rationalist butted against shams and overthrew tyrannies, but, unconsciously, he paved a way for other shams and tyrannies to follow. When once the idea was grasped that man and ape had common ancestry, it seemed more legitimate to treat man as though he were an ape. "Survival of the fittest" made an excuse for aggressive wars and all the horrors of industrial competition. Birds of paradise were exterminated, whilst the cockroach increased and multiplied. Francis of Assisi was flouted as a person of unenlightened views. The hard rock of facts had been found, and it was found to be very hard indeed. To-day, the world's movement is to get away

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from it at full speed, even by the most irrational courses.

Attempting to recover his position, the Rationalist has lately taken to advertise his wares. In parts of the newspapers where one is accustomed to find requests to buy somebody's toffee or to sell one's false teeth, a new and striking query is often to be found: "Of all the Isms, have you studied Rationalism?" It is a clever appeal to jaded appetites. If you happen to be for the moment out of tune with botulism, socialism, cannibalism, or whatever may have been your latest occupation or recreation, here are people ready to cater for you, and a throb of interest is aroused. For me the next step was to write for further particulars, and by return of post I received a copy of a publication called *The Literary Guide*. It was six months old, but I am ready to think it was sent to me because it was a particularly good number. The first article in it was by Mr. Joseph McCabe, and it dealt with the League of Nations. The writer alluded to Poland as "an annexe of the Vatican," and dismissed Lord Robert Cecil as a mystic. This did not seem very helpful, so I turned to the end of the paper and found a letter from an anonymous individual who had

lost religion. It read rather like a paragraph lifted from the *War Cry*, emasculated by a sub-editor, and inverted by a mischievous compositor. The rest of the contents was not specially notable, except for a joke about Abraham's bosom, which, I understand, was current in the patriarch's own age. More illuminating was a pamphlet giving the aims of the Rationalist Press Association. In this it was stated that, "so far as can be judged informally from correspondence received," the majority of members are not Theists. It was clearly implied that it did not matter whether they were or not.

The old order of Rationalists included many great men, and most of them, perhaps, were inclined to violence. Huxley, "knocking an imposture on the head," is a figure large enough to give distinction to a whole age, and to such a man, be he dead or alive, I would always take off my hat. I have heard of "Bradlaugh and blasphemy" as an alliterative tag in vogue with platform speakers in the 'eighties. There were giants in those days, and they were so absorbed by the question of religion that some of them had to attack it with hammer and tongs. One would hope to find in their successors a remnant of size and strength, a touch of passion, or, at

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least, an indication that they cared greatly about the things for or against which one supposed them to be fighting. Instead, one meets Mr. McCabe approaching a world problem in the spirit of a pernickety district visitor looking for trouble, and, finally, one comes on the announcement that to be or not to be a Theist is of no moment. The new Rationalists have a tameness as shocking as that of the beasts on Alexander Selkirk's island. They touch the level of Addison's young man, who had doubts about immortality, and by his subsequent talk at the table contrived to frighten his sister and to debauch the butler.

THE FABIAN SOCIETY

EVERY intelligent boy and girl who has been given sufficient education to reach the matriculation standard must, at some time between the seventeenth and twentieth year, put to him-, or her-, self a certain momentous question. With a horizon daily expanding, an hour must arrive to ask, "What is a Fabian?" Take the case of the undergraduate at Oxford or Cambridge. At latest on the first day of his first term, he is faced with this problem, but, having several others to solve, he may fail to give it the consideration it deserves. His breakfast table is probably laden with invitations to have his photograph taken by Messrs. Hills and Saunders, to obtain socks and gown from Mr. Shepherd, tobacco from another, books and wine from a fourth and fifth. So much attention is flattering, but the really sensitive mind is yet more pleasantly titillated by the circular which casually suggests membership of the Fabian Society. It is difficult to resist the call. Yesterday a schoolboy, and to-day asked to associate one's unimportant ego with the

beneficent yet mysterious work of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb! New visions arise, and one dreams of basking in the brilliance of G. B. S. himself. Wherefore the real question in many cases goes unanswered. Should one become a Fabian, one would immediately begin a course of investigating the whole world, and consequently have little leisure for close inquiry into the meaning of oneself. Should one miss the chance, there would be nothing for it but to affect the pose of ignorance that it had ever existed, or, anyhow, that it did not matter in the least. For all whom it may concern, however, this answer is given: a Fabian is a principle on two legs.

The Fabian Society likes to enlist its members young, whilst they can yet be moulded. Those who in later life are received into its bosom, if one may use such a word of a body that is by nature flat-chested, have probably done some independent thinking, and independence is of all things the most distrusted at 41, Grosvenor Road, Westminster. If it has gone far enough to give you an individuality, you are well nigh a hopeless case. In that great blue book to be compiled in the Fabian future, wherein will be enumerated all the inhabitants of these islands

who can be classified according to types, you will have no place. Instead, you will be listed in its appendix, a black book, which it is hoped will be slender, wherein will be the names of all those who cannot be classified at all. In the state arranged on Fabian lines, you will do everything by rule; rise, dress, work, take nourishment and recreation, see the stars, reproduce the species, and, above all, think, according to rules and time-tables drawn up by those who have made lifelong study of these several activities. A present difficulty is that even recognized experts occasionally differ. Mr. and Mrs. Webb are not agreed on dietary, while the conclusions reached by Mr. G. D. H. Cole in economics are painfully heterodox. Such divergences are regrettable, but, after all, one should remember that a generation ago the Fabian Society had scarcely begun to regulate mankind.

Moreover, differences among the elect are confined to such as can be tabulated. Under the heading "carnivorous" Mr. Webb is to be found, whilst his slightly better half is among the "herbivorous." Even Mr. Cole is not a lonely figure, for the card index will direct you to him among the heretical schools, with

cross references to Mr. Orage and syndicalism. It is felt, too, that if Mr. Webb had in youth enjoyed the educational advantages of a Fabian summer school he might be as sound on nuts as he is on figures. Similarly, had Mr. Cole for a few years sat patiently at the feet of the right people in London, instead of consorting with minor poets at Oxford, the kink in his views might have been straightened. Influence, applied early and often, counts for much, whether one is dealing with young persons or with Government departments, and with it is linked the habit of forgathering for the exchange of ideas. One remembers the plaint of Altiora Bailey in *The New Machiavelli*, that the new, crude socialists who arrived in town after the 1906 election could not be tempted to assemble. They were not malleable; they were provincial, silent, and suspicious. An idea to a Fabian is what a postage stamp is to a philatelist; it is something to be collected, catalogued, bartered for another, put in a book with a piece of gummed paper, and quietly removed when a better one is found.

Measurable eccentricities, as has been noted, are allowed, but one must add that they are allowed only to those who can afford them.

Mr. Belloc once pointed out that Fabianism aimed at the socialization of the poor alone, and not of the whole community, but this absorption with the welfare of the proletariat is not to be taken as a sign of sympathy or love, for a principle cannot feel, any more than a type, or collection of types, can be loved. Human passions, eruptive and unsystematized, must not be allowed to sway in the battle against dirt, drink, waste, and congenital disease. Poverty is attacked because it is a factor in producing these things, but no Fabian fancies his work will be done when the goal of the "equalitarian" state, to which Mr. Webb is driving, has been reached. Every adult and child will then have been put beyond fear of hunger, and none will have more than a modest competence, but the poor, though far less poor, will still be the poor, and, therefore, they will be disorderly and extravagant. They will buy patent leather boots and silk blouses if the Fabian manager is not there to preach, even to enforce, the wearing of sandals and cellular clothing.

"Trust the people" is the one saying which for ever condemns you in Fabian circles to be classed as doctrinaire, Liberal and dotard. Nobody is to be trusted, least of all the British

workman. Inspect him, make him sanitary, pay him through a savings bank, house him in a civilian barrack, ration him, keep him from playing skittles, decide whether he is to marry and, if so, whom, give him a number, and make a careful note of it; that is the Fabian programme. I have often wondered whether a Fabian hand was not pulling some strings at the birth of Dora and during the years of her growth. Who knows? Did some emissary from Grosvenor Road say a word in season to Lord Haldane, who repeated it to Sir John Simon, who passed it to a permanent official? Certainly, the depositing of the soldiers' war gratuities at the post office was due to Fabian inspiration. It was considered the only way to thwart a natural desire to get drunk on the spot. Such is malism.

The equalitarian State under Fabian managers might have commanded a fair measure of support in past years whilst we were still under the spell of something called German efficiency. It stands no chance now. Security of bed and board is inadequate compensation for freedom curtailed to vanishing point. Experience of the comparatively mild discipline demanded by military martinets does not predispose one to the sort

of regimentation which Mr. Webb and his friends would substitute for our present dependence on the capitalist. Faulty, or vicious, as the present system may be, it allows us our intervals of liberty, and the man who has just shed his identity disc and achieved emancipation from the sergeant-major will have no tampering with them. In the industrial unrest of to-day there is something not wholly material. "Men who are men again" will not sell their birthright for any mess of pottage, let alone lentil pottage.

Some writers for whom I have the highest respect, among them Mr. E. T. Raymond, have likened the Fabians to the Girondins, but I am obliged to disagree. Surely the strongest characteristic of the Girondins was love of freedom. Their only other fixed idea was a furious patriotism, or, if you will, nationalism. For the rest they were sadly deficient in principles, and in their lives liberty tended to licence. The true Fabians, on the other hand, although their women may for hygienic reasons abjure corsets, can be correctly described as strait-laced. They have the "painful mind" of Robespierre, with all his beliefs in disciplining the mob, in tart morality, in "golden mediocrity" as a political and economic aim. With him, they dislike

the swagger of red caps and the revolutionary *tutoiement* which has for modern equivalent the comrade-calling speech of the stump orator. Of course, it will be objected to such a comparison that the Fabian is a gentle and moderate being who would turn sick at once if an electrically driven guillotine were set up in Trafalgar Square to-morrow. Quite true, but Robespierre resigned his judgeship at Arras rather than condemn a man to death. His later career simply proves that nothing is as pitiless as a principle. One may be sure that a Fabian tribunal would be lenient to a man accused of singing "God Save the King," having shares in a railway company or having voted for Lord Hugh Cecil, but would one feel one's neck equally safe if one were a possible instrument for transgressing the latest decree of the eugenisists, or had been informed against for smoking a foul pipe in one's bedroom? Judgment would be given without animosity; the sentence would be entirely on principle. I would rather be a profiteer in a hungry crowd, and trust my life to luck or a joke.

Busier than ever in arranging the affairs of others, and flushed by certain recent successes, the Fabians cannot be expected to realize that

their day is past. They have probably never felt more alive than they do now. In fact, as they ramify into committees and enquiries and the very offices of Whitehall, they may be excused for a notion that they are the only people of substantial importance in Britain in this year of grace. Like delusions have been cherished by others. Mr. L. P. Jacks once wrote of the contempt which ghosts entertain for human beings. Ghosts, he said, were sceptical of our reality, and supported their doubts by pointing to the triviality of alleged communications from our world, whilst even the most credulous admitted that our intelligence was limited and our antics were revolting. So it is with the Fabians. They see the mass of mankind as trivial, stupid, and absurd, and with no more desire to be trained than unbroken colts in a field. Entirely on principle, they lecture us from time to time on our follies. Then, they go home to dine on principles and such creature comforts as their principles allow them.

THE WAR POETS

IN the years between the death of Tennyson and the beginning of the war we were repeatedly told by all the academically minded that England had ceased to produce great poetry. They were not content with saying we had no great poets; they invariably added a rider that the littleness of the times prevented a poet from being great. For a few years there was, indeed, depression. One had gloomy satisfaction in noting how Mr. Dobson supported the pessimistic view by writing perfectly turned verses on antique trivialities, and the genius of Francis Thompson, which would have upset all current criticism, was conveniently left undiscovered. Such a state of affairs could not last long. New men began to write, and, stranger still, a new public began to read their work with an admiration which the faint praise of the professors could not quell. A shop was opened for the sale of their books, and, I regret to say, there was a boom in poems.

Superior people who had sat at the feet of Arnold or stuffed themselves with Spencer,

would probably have died protesting that we were decadent and could produce nothing that would last, had not war caused them suddenly to recant. From study of dead letters sometimes comes a certain hostility to life, and the majority of dons and doctors of philosophy seem to be more bloodthirsty than the rest of human kind. In the last years of peace, we, as a race, had been growing in gentleness and consideration towards the weaker elements in creation. The natural world was still beautiful. Birds sang, flowers bloomed, lovers walked in the lanes, the hills stood; but they who professed culture said there was no "immediate stimulus" to poetry. Was ever greater nonsense talked or written? Then, at the first report of a gun, some literary wirepuller leaps to his study table with a tag from "Coriolanus" to declare that peace was "mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible," and war was "spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent." All take up the baying. The new Osborn judgement is pronounced; the young men, for some obscure reason to which history gives no clue, are called Elizabethans. The "crowded hour of glorious life" figures in all the anthologies which appear to celebrate carnage. Here was the outburst of "national energy"

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for which the Muses were said to have been waiting. From the study window there did seem to be worse things than war.

So much for the mentors. The bards themselves rose to the occasion in various ways. Mr. Cannan wrote on the spirit of England, Mr. Chappell, of Bath railway station, delivered a frankly abusive hymn of hate, Mr. W. L. Courtney struck for life and liberty in the *Daily Telegraph*, and Mr. Begbie thanked God for something or other. To many, however, even amongst those who went most quickly into print, one can still feel gratitude. Mr. Hewlett, for example, did good service by somehow making the geographical fact that England is an island seem extraordinarily jolly, even though one did not expect the enemy's air force to respect our sea-girt security. For others, such as Mr. Hodgson, who refrained from taking part in the chorus, words of thanks are inadequate; but their number was very small. The boom in poetry reached unprecedented size. Mr. Birrell made himself disliked by calling for a truce of pens.

Publication of Rupert Brooke's sonnets was held to strengthen the case for those who had prophesied that in war the spirit of English

poetry would find itself. The writer's death spread his fame, for the academical school of reviewers cannot bear to see a star until it has set, and when the poet was dead they could feel that he was almost one of themselves. Some of his lines inspired by the war have incontestable beauty, but of others, had fate spared him, he might have repented. Anyhow, it was absurd to write as though war had made him. He who had written "The Great Lover" was in need of no shrill clarions to arouse him, and one cannot help feeling that the artist in him would have revolted against turgid applause given to work which could be quoted in the daily press as of "topical interest."

Since then, the Muse in Arms has expressed herself in many ways. At first there was a revival of the "Tommy" school of versifying which treated the soldier as a splendid scoundrel who spoke queer dialects and was mildly blasphemous. It touched on war as on a bank holiday outing, and advertised the Army as the one part of our social system in which a man could be truly free and would have unlimited drinks to drown his memory of a wretched past in civilian clothes. Doubtless, the writers were well-intentioned, and, like the designers of posters,

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may have been of assistance to the recruiting sergeant. They may have been under no false impression as to the artistic value of their work, but they fell into several glaring errors. I once heard a French soldier explaining to his female friends that he did not really care to be called the hairy one, and there were a good many in the Kitchener armies who were not exactly flattered by the description some rhymers gave of them. They did not say much, but I believe they considered that the tradition of "The Private of the Buffs" had had its day.

The best that can be said for the "Tommy" school is that it only endured for a month or two. Later verses on the war were mainly written from the front, and were in a very different tone. There were poets in all the forces, combatant and non-combatant, and some of what they wrote is almost certainly imperishable; but that they would have been mute or composed inferior work, save for experience of active service, is unlikely. The verse that came from the battlefields was, however, remarkable in more ways than one. It administered a wholesome shock to those who had prated of joyous, careless boys seeking glory

with songs on their lips. The soldier poets were anything but what they had been expected to be. By turns, they were sad or savage, but always, in some way or another, at war against war. At moments one inclines to praise even the crudest of them, but they who wrote unsparingly wished to be read without sparing. It is the duty of a bomber to throw bombs, but throwing bombs is not poetry. Neither is throwing rhymed lines to be called poetry, and if the lines are called *vers libre* because they neither rhyme nor scan, they are apt to be still less like poetry. Even throwing trench-mud at the white waistcoat of the obese chairman of a "Get-on-with-the-War" meeting was not necessarily poetry, though it had much else to recommend it as spiritual exercise and bodily relief.

Factories of munitions began to close soon after the Armistice, and it would have been well had there been also a halt in the making of certain brands of verse. A year or two might have been spent in thought, until the emotions of the past could be recollected in that tranquillity which Wordsworth advocated for successful composition. Instead, there has been a steady flow of little books containing poetised memories

and impressions of the war. In the past there were truths which no soldier could put into stark prose ; they had to be disguised in a literary form which to the majority at home seemed a vehicle for exaggerations, bizarre fancies, or everything except reality. One had, therefore, the strange spectacle of journalists giving the world romance in the ordered columns of a prosaic newspaper, whilst cold verities could only be dished up with a majuscule to garnish every line. The old excuse has disappeared. What a man has to write, he can now write plainly. Further, would not a return to Dryden's theory that giving delight is poesy's chief function be welcome ? When a poet becomes oratorical, satirical, or simply informative, is he not trespassing on grounds which do not properly belong to him ?

Because, to use Mr. Bottomley's phrase, he has failed "to churn out" an ode on peace, a silly attack has been made on the Poet Laureate, and one has heard sneers because he had no verbal felicities with which to greet the changing fortunes of our late campaigns. Had a certain section of the Press and public had its way, he would undoubtedly have "gone out" with the Prime Minister to whose fine taste his

appointment was due, and the mythical butt of sack would have been awarded by acclamation to Touchstone of the *Daily Mail*. It can be readily understood that standing silent on a peak of Darien is not a habit admired by those who prefer headlines to literature and find wisdom's last word in the Major's late wire; but from the rest one looks for a higher standard. Probably, there is no poet in the land, from humblest to greatest, who does not in theory honour the reticence of Dr. Bridges, but there is yet something else to demand. Cannot his example be followed?

Verses of occasions, even of great occasions, are not a poet's business. He is under no obligation whatever to sing either of the sorrows of war or of the triumph of a victorious peace. If he is impelled to write of these things, let him write, and then let him put in a drawer what he has written, and keep it there for at least twelve months. If, by the end of that time, he has not decided to use it for lighting a pipe, it will be worth his while to publish it. What our poets have to say may be much to the point, and they may have the means to infuse art into their message; but good

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work does not spoil with keeping. I am not afraid to face a year without new verse, for I believe there would be a reward of poetry at the end. The boom, by the way, is all but finished.

KINGS IN EXILE

WHEN Candide met the six kings dining at the hotel in Venice, and had given alms to one of them, he was moved to express wonder at the portent. It was left to Martin, his phlegmatic friend, to assure him that the honour of their company had been a bagatelle unworthy of attention, and that there were some millions of men on earth more to be pitied than the deposed monarchs. What may be the exact number of princes now wandering about Europe or resting in retirement, I do not know. There are two who have been emperors, whilst Greece, Portugal, Bavaria, Saxony, Wurtemberg, and Bulgaria, provide a half-dozen to match the tale of Candide's fellow guests. The list can be almost indefinitely prolonged if one adds to it the motley throng of minor sovereigns, heirs apparent and presumptive, grand dukes and pretenders, not to speak of their women folk. Some of the best hotels in Switzerland should be able to advertise attractions at least equal to those which amazed Voltaire's ingenuous hero in the Venetian week of carnival. That they would

reap rich reward is certain. Seeing the lions feed is an entertainment which never palls.

Not many have Martin's fund of sound sense. Contact with royalty, even if it be only with an ex-prince of Thunder-ten-Tronckh, would seem cheap at any price business management might exact for it, especially if the stump of a cigar with the impress of a royal heel, or some such souvenir, were guaranteed. It must grieve the true democrat to know that this kind of snobbery still exists. But let him comfort himself. Only the very youngest in this country were not born in an age of rampant royalism. If, in the Victorian period, it was not actually held that kings could do no wrong, it was generally taught that at least those of them who were related to our late queen did do no wrong, and, as few of them could not claim cousinship or nearer kin, the old doctrine was re-established with but a slight alteration. Then, and for some years afterwards, the crowned heads of Europe, with their families, were exhibited to us as often as possible, and an imposing show they sometimes made. Men trained in republican principles were heard to admit that a black-coated president in such an assembly would have been as incongruous as a barn-door fowl among peacocks, and could have brought

no credit on his country. The world was mesmerized. London sightseers do not cheer from motives of deep policy, yet, when Germany had become a politically unpopular nation, a Hohenzollern was still given a rapturous reception. Now, when a black coat seems more reputable wear than several brilliant uniforms, we can be said to be mending our opinions, but the threadbare fabric of our old imaginings is still visible between the patches.

A strange remnant of our reverence for royalty as royalty is seen in the English demand for hanging the Kaiser, or, at least, for bringing him to public trial. We pay him the tribute of believing that he remains a person of importance. Abroad they have lost this delusion. In Paris, whilst he was the "All Highest," Wilhelm's blood flowing in the Rue de la Roquette would have gratified the multitude, yet would have seemed to desecrate a spot made memorable by so many criminals of a less offensive type. But interest in Wilhelm ceased with his fall. Over there, perhaps, they have shrewder ideas than we have of the value of public punishment for such offenders. Did not their own imperialists make St. Helena a shrine, whilst at Chislehurst they could only find a mausoleum? Looking

to Germany, there is the same lesson for us in another shape. Having talked glibly for months of the new German Republic, we were sharply reminded at Versailles that the German Empire still exists. An Empire without an Emperor may appear at first sight somewhat like the play of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark, but, after all, it is only the royal ghost that has been eliminated from the tragedy. Our late enemies cling to what they think useful in their past. They make no mistake about a Hohenzollern being indispensable.

In our desire to see justice done to the terrible War Lord, we have unduly flattered the wood-cutter of Amerongen. Otherwise, the kings have for the most part been allowed to depart with commendable absence of fuss, and cries of hatred for them have been almost as rare as gushes of regret. Their old subjects have kept their heads, and Hapsburgs, Coburgs, and the rest, have, consequently, been allowed to keep theirs. The Russian murders break a good record, and lead one to ask whether violence of revolution will not lead there and elsewhere to violence of reaction. In countries under Bolshevik rule, the *laudator temporis acti* is, of course, given a magnificent chance to set people sighing for

the comparatively gentle methods of an Ivan the Terrible. Even in lands governed on the most approved principles, reaction sometimes seems faintly possible. In France, for instance, M. Léon Daudet and M. Maurras hint daily of the crown as the symbol of order, honesty, and strength, and their readers are often carried away as far as to take a piece of chalk to write "*Vive le Roi*" on the next wall they happen to pass. It is so easy to find the faults in a democratic government. Where the smallest bribe cannot be given without fear that it will be common property in a week, where there is no Bastille to place the virtuous individual whom everybody has forgotten to corrupt, there is always a crop of scandals. If they did not exist, they would have to be invented because they are all so highly probable. If M. Daudet and General Page Croft have ever been brought together, what a lot they must have told each other!

Since the days of King Wamba, there can have been no part of Europe where good people have not met, shaken their heads, and said they did not know to what things were coming, giving their voices just that inflection which promises that they know rather more than they care to own. A crown, if it happen to be un-

occupied, is a rallying point for them. The time has gone by when a German princeling was automatically provided for every vacancy, and there are more republics than monarchies in the world to-day, but it does not follow we have heard the last of royalist plots. Against their success the chief barriers are the characters of the gentlemen who sooner or later would have to be brought forward to perform the leading parts. The one word which stems the Continental Monarchist's tide of talk is the name of his rightful liege. He has been sketching for you the ideal ruler, the "patriot king," as seen against a crowd of sanguinary adventurers or chuckleheaded deputies, and you bring him to pause by mentioning a person whose only title to regard is his place in that international directory of the cemeteries, the *Almanach de Gotha*. The mere pretender, indeed, may be in a better position than the dethroned sovereign. If there be many who know not Joseph, it may be distinctly to Joseph's advantage.

To what point royal obscurity should be carried is, however, matter for debate. Some approve a revision of the *Almanach de Gotha* to include the new postal addresses of several regal personages who have lately changed abodes,

or, if that be undersirable, the most convenient *poste restante*. One of their late majesties was last reported driving round and round a forest, he, unlike the Shakesporean Richard, having obtained a horse, and even a cab, in exchange for his kingdom. Others are said to be willing to reside anywhere out of sight of German territory; but such information is almost too discreetly vague. Their own people, particularly those of the loyalist party, may not regret the veil assumed by these august or serene travellers, but between Bayswater and Tooting Bec there are braver hearts. Already, I fancy, they are willing to forget misunderstandings begotten of the war. They remember that the Princess Hildegarde of Ruritania, of whom so many photographs were published a few years ago, must now be of an age to marry, and they tell themselves that she, descended from our own early Georges, is almost half English. Once, they had a framed postcard of her on the mantelshelf, but it was removed when her father made the mistake of his life by drawing the sword against Britain and democracy. Previously, she had seemed almost one of the family, and now they wish they had temporarily turned her picture to the wall, in the way once traditional for

erring daughters, instead of banishing it so thoroughly that it was lost in the next year's spring cleaning. In Switzerland, on the doorstep of the Hôtel des Rois en Exil, an enterprising photographer even now awaits her.

Swiss and Dutch are hospitable people, yet they complain of a surplus of itinerant royalties. If by the end of the next decade half of them are not in our home counties, it will be surprising. We are ready to hang them or to kiss their hands, but we cannot get it out of our heads that they must have abnormal attentions. Like Samuel Pepys, we expect them to bring us good weather. That their own subjects have expelled them as undesirables makes no difference. The society journalist still delights to record how a horse show or tennis tournament has been visited by the "King of Portugal," though the cheery young man of whom he writes has no more claim to the title than has Mr. Snowden to be styled the Honourable Member for Blackburn. Trust in the universal benignity of princes may have passed, but a lively interest in them remains, and the society journal keeps it alive with pages on which Gertie Golightly of the Gaiety simpers cheek by jowl with His or Her Highness of nowhere in particular. In no other

country of this hemisphere is there the absence of humour which permits this type of publication to flourish. The French proverb has it that all the dead are not in the tomb, and long ago the wits of the boulevards laughed Wilhelm into limbo. They will never understand the yearning of John Bull to raise him high as Haman. Nor will they ever fathom the mentality of Mrs. Bull, his respectable spouse, who divides her devotions so equally between crowns, courts, and corybantes.

MR. BERNARD SHAW

METTERNICH once spoke of Canning as a malevolent meteor hurled by divine Providence upon Europe. In a far part of the country I have a friend who for the last five and twenty years has held a somewhat similar view of Mr. Bernard Shaw, although doubting whether the force which launched the eminent publicist on us may not have been infernal. Why such strong language should have been used, even by an enraged Teuton, of a statesman who can now only be imagined as wearing a halo of mildness in an aroma of respectability, cannot be easily understood. Equally, it is hard to see why Mr. Shaw should still in some quarters enjoy a reputation for being dangerous, and be allowed to live on it as on an unearned increment. "Unearned" is perhaps rather a harsh term, but let me explain. In the 'nineties or thereabouts it may have been right to regard him as a "revolutionary writer," so any notoriety he then gained was honestly acquired. It became his capital. Despite really conscientious efforts he has added nothing to it, has, indeed, lost

a part of it, and is now existing on its diminishing interest. It must be left to some pundit of Socialism to decide whether this state of affairs is either moral or economic, asking his pardon in advance for here using two words which to him will sound synonymous.

As Mr. Shaw has said, "the novelties of one generation are only the resuscitated fashions of the generation before last," and in the next, I would add, they are often tiresome. The "Life Force," when Mr. Shaw began to write about it in *The Irrational Knot*, seemed a tough customer, a bull amidst the domestic crockery, but it is now the tame cat of all the best suburbs. When Mr. Shaw started to rend the sheets of the double bed, there were plenty who shrieked sacrilege, but to-day every one of my maiden aunts shares his abhorrence of that piece of furniture. Beyond question, he has influenced his coevals. Look at all the retired professional men and elderly Anglo-Indians who, when their physicians failed to heal their gout and livers, hearkened to his exposures of medical humbug and followed Mrs. Eddy. Again, take the Superman. I admit that being incurably a man without a prefix I used to be nervous of that. Perhaps I am only less fearful now.

Mr. Shaw called for the Superman. Then, the whole ha'penny press yelled for the Superman. You all know how nobly the Geddes family responded, and are still responding, to the cry for their services.

In the stage directions for the most brilliant of his comedies Mr. Shaw wrote that because of its lack of upholstery the hall of the Ptolemies would appear bare and ridiculous to a rich Englishman. Five minutes later Cæsar was testily ordering a chair, because even the most Shavian Roman of them all did not relish sitting on the floor. We have got beyond that sort of thing. There is no need to go to ancient Egypt for lessons in simple living. For a small charge the underground railway will take you to see the Shavian Englishman at Golders Green sitting without a murmur on anything but a cushioned sofa. Considering how many worthy people Mr. Shaw has influenced in one way and another, it would be foolish to deny that, like Ruskin, Carlyle, and his own Father Keegan, he has done something to improve the mind and to raise the tone of his age. For all this he has neither asked nor received the credit he deserves. Instead, we are still told to think of him as subversive and shocking, but one questions

whether even the dramatic critics or the censor can be deceived again. Years have elapsed since he gave them their last stage fright. When Elizabeth Dolittle said her naughty word, a good many recalled how in their lost youth it had been classical at our ancient seats of learning, and speculated as to how soon it would pass into the vocabularies of Somerville and Newnham. It is understood that they did not have long to wait.

Perhaps the best explanation of Mr. Shaw as he is can be found by recognizing that he has got into the writing habit. A story is told of Mr. Chesterton that he refused, despite his splendid physical equipment, to be a special constable, giving as his reason that, in the event of civil trouble, he could imagine no revolution which he would not prefer to the Government. That, of course, was not to say he would be heart and soul with every popular outbreak; it would be a choice of evils. Mr. Shaw is in exactly the opposite position. He must have disliked every government under which he has lived, but I cannot imagine a revolution he would not dislike more than any of them. Writing matter that was once revolutionary is, in consequence, more congenial to his nature than

renovating his programme. At the Methodist school in Dublin he may have heard sung the hymn which affirms that doing ends in death, and there is, anyhow, the Puritan in him to make him set the merit of faith above works. In theologians such belief may, or may not, be excellent, but it is a bar to efficiency in those engaged in promoting revolutions or anything else except companies.

Seven or eight years ago, Mr. Holbrook Jackson, one of his warmest admirers, remarked that Mr. Shaw had for twenty years been saying the selfsame things. He has continued saying them, and it appears to me that a person with such a passion for repetition must forfeit his claims to be treated as a revolutionary writer. To be revolutionary one must revolve, even if only on one's own axis, and, though Mr. Shaw has been accused of standing on his head, he has never been taxed with facing both ways. By any just use of words he must be called a stationary writer. Once, he wrote that "when a man has anything to tell in this world, the difficulty is not to make him tell it, but to prevent him from telling it too often," and to this difficulty he has succumbed. By never keeping his birthdays, he may have retained a youthful spirit,

but he has missed much. He has avoided growing old with his contemporaries, but he has missed keeping young with the generation which followed them. He has missed realizing how much of his lecturing has become superfluous, because those who came into the world after him seized at a glance what he was laboriously learning all through his twenties. Finally, he has missed his exit.

Socrates was poisoned by the Athenians when they had had enough of him, and Aristides was ostracized when he had become a bore. Mr. Shaw has suggested the lethal chamber for those whose eccentricities have become unbearable to the commonwealth. I deprecate extreme measures, but agree that Mr. Shaw is sometimes annoying. As long as he played the part of gad-fly, he merited all encouragement, but the temptation has lately been to think of him rather as the bluebottle against the window pane, which exasperates but is ineffective. His chafing, for instance, against the beef-eating, game-playing, habits of the normal, "healthy," Englishman, is monotonous. In the first place he knows well that normality is always in a minority. Secondly, the class he attacks had good mettle in it, as is proved by it never producing a passably

good waiter. Mr. Shaw's war against sentimentality has, also, lasted too long. Sentimentality is not a bad thing in its way. Mr. Shaw has no need of it, yet it may make duller people do the things of which he approves. It is a target for wit on the stage, but "any fool can make any audience laugh." If it had done nothing but cause Sir Frederic Banbury to take up the cudgels against the vivisectors, it would have shown itself a force at which no sane reformer should scoff.

When Mr. Shaw wrote that Cleopatra's guardsmen were more civilized than modern British officers because they did not dig up and mutilate their dead enemies, he must have asked himself whether we would be dense enough to be angry or would spot that he was writing provocative nonsense. His tongue was in his cheek. Civilization, he said to himself, is striding since its latest children have given up mutilating the living. Half the time, of course, he, like the baby in *Alice in Wonderland*, only does it to annoy. As one of the Irish garrison in England, he is more concerned to worry the natives than to better their lot. His dual nationality complicates the estimate of his methods and intentions. His manner, if I may a little misquote him,

is frivolous, because he is nearly an Englishman ; but he sometimes means what he says because he is almost an Irishman. Anyhow, he is very much the British Islander as he has described him : “ seeking quarrels merely to show how stubborn his jaws are.” Consequently, he was one of the war’s first casualties. He went over the top at the wrong moment. He damaged himself irreparably with the public by untimely sayings which with unquestioned propriety appeared a month or two later in every smug leading article. His sporting instinct may be gratified by knowing he was first in the field by a short neck, but life in England, strange as it may seem to him, is not all sport. It is nothing that his judgment may have been just. Mr. Shaw has said that a judge must not even be misunderstood.

MR. HILAIRE BELLOC

WHILST the country was at war the advisability of reading Mr. Belloc was clear, and the advantage of agreeing with him was almost equally patent. In days when all conversation had a way of turning to military discussion, the peaceful citizen was in need of a guide. When he wanted information on such points as the juncture of Russky and Brussilov, or how the Fourth Division had stood in regard to the Le Cateau-Cambrai line on the 25th August, he went as readily to the works of Mr. Belloc as, when leaving London for his sea-side holiday, he went to the works of Mr. Bradshaw. In both cases he acted under fear that worse things might befall him. He did not really like the way in which either of his authorities set the facts of the case before him. Secretly, he resented the dogmatic, more than pontifical, fashion in which they answered his queries by groups of letters and figures. With words he could, and commonly did, argue whenever he found them in print, rebutting them to his own satisfaction with others he had found in print

elsewhere, but for those people who confronted him with symbols, which once divorced from their context became meaningless, he could not pretend to be a match. On the other hand, experience had taught him that neglect of the time-table always brought in its train dire humiliations, and he soon learnt that failure to follow Mr. Belloc's teaching had equally unpleasant results.

Imagine him, for instance, at his club, button-holed by a man who insisted on telling him what would happen when A.B., an irresistible German force, met C.D., an immovable French object. Unless he could counter this by observations on the importance of W.X.Y.Z., the open strategic square, he might have to admit himself worsted by one who was politically unsound, notoriously a bore, and to whom he could give a stroke a hole. After one such *contretemps* his course of reading had nothing whatever to do with his normal tastes. In the past, war had pleasantly stirred his mind when he had looked at a picture by Mr. Caton Woodville or heard the "Charge of the Light Brigade" recited; but now he had to learn about it anew, and with such pains as he had not known since his first exercises in algebra. In most cases, however,

the Belloc student found himself rewarded. If he did not precisely understand all that was toward, his pretences became at least plausible. Sometimes, perhaps, his master misled him. In the third year of war a journalist made a list of Mr. Belloc's mistakes, and so paid him unconscious tribute. People did not catalogue the blunders of other military critics; they had neither the requisite time nor paper.

Widely was Mr. Belloc accepted in those days as a teacher, and there is no gainsaying his qualifications. It is enough to mention here but two of them—a good grasp of his subject's technical side, and the ability to write of it intelligibly. There is no difficulty in explaining his success, but I have, unfortunately, to turn to the question of his failures in other fields. Mr. Belloc has spent most of his adult life in addressing the British public, yet only for a few years, when we were living in abnormal circumstances, has he been given serious hearing. To the small minority which delights in literary style some of his books are a joy for ever, but the larger number to whom one might expect his controversial work to appeal has merely gaped at him. In 1906 he entered Parliament as one of the Liberal victors. The elections of

that year were a triumph of the Nonconformist conscience ; the greatest and, perhaps, the last of its triumphs in England. Mr. Belloc thought the polls ought to have been a pronouncement in favour of liberty and democracy. He imagined the country was ripe for its Danton ; as a matter of fact it was hardly ready for its Campbell-Bannerman.

The rising young man appeared at Westminster at the wrong hour, and the result was his attack on the party system. At the time of its publication one could read his book on that subject with a good deal of sympathy, but reading it now one may find that sympathy has waned. The author reminds one how in days of old every move in the Parliamentary game was arranged between the two front benches. Nowadays two men may be sitting on the same front bench and each be making a move of which the other is in happy ignorance. Indeed, observers have of late noticed more than one Minister with his right hand chastizing his left for surreptitious activities. Already one may doubt whether the change has been for the better, and suspect that the old system had some of the very virtues Mr. Belloc most hotly denied it, to wit, firm principles, openness, and regard for the people.

In that same book was a denunciation of party newspapers, with their wearisome repetition of stale cries and their devotion to vested interests in game or groceries. They were not all they should have been ; but can one really prefer the modern journal with a new cry every week, and devotion to no interest at all save that of its circulation department ?

In the general upheaval, however, Mr. Belloc should have found a place for himself in public life. Instead, he is once more in his Cave of Adullam, preaching, but with no more than two or three of the converted gathered together as his regular congregation. More than once whilst writing this article I have had to remind myself that I have come to bury Mr. Belloc not to praise him, but this I cannot help noticing, that the number of his disciples does not increase. He is an enigma to most Englishmen, and as such, is distrusted. Perhaps he is too revolutionary for our temper. Those others who from time to time are indicted as Bolshevists in leading organs of private opinion, pursue their evolutionary way, looking for socialism to succeed capitalism as day succeeds night. Do big businesses hold the field ? So much the better : they are but milestones showing how near we

are to that earthly paradise prophesied by Saint Marx.

Such opportunism is not in Mr. Belloc's nature. He is a second Omar in his desire to grasp our sorry scheme of things and to shatter it to bits. Afterwards, of course, we are each to acquire a morsel, and his programme as outlined in *The Servile State* and elsewhere, is to me attractive. I should like to see him settled on his three acres of hop garden, and using his great talents as chairman of the guild which would own the local oast-house. But, just as he is too revolutionary for the Extreme Left, so he is too reactionary for the Extreme Right. Reaction has its friends, yet, when they are examined it is found that they wish to return to the days of Mr. Gladstone, or, in a few desperate cases, to Lord Melbourne. For Mr. Belloc reactionary is never the correct term. He is a resurrectionist. In the age he would revive, no temporal peer held an acre of church land, and the Stock Exchange had not been built. Many persons whom one does not commonly rank among the progressives are ready to use the latest implements of modern warfare should his threats of a return to our bad old days ever materialize.

The apparent paradox of Mr. Belloc might have left the public in the position of Buridan's ass, did it not chance to have straight in front of it another bundle of hay, which, though it be poor stuff, it continues to munch grumblingly in the manner of all other intelligent asses. In consequence, our philosopher and his problems have been neglected. Probably he never understood the nature, that is to say the nationality, of the beast. Mr. Belloc may be a Sussex man, but nobody makes the mistake of thinking he is English. The Channel, that sacred strip of blue water to the native, means nothing to him. Has he not written of the woods which stretch from Tay to Roncesvalles? He is the last of the Romans. Racially and spiritually he ought, then, to be a good European, even, in its widest sense, a citizen of the world. To the struggle between the nations has succeeded a yet greater struggle for unity among the peoples; but in every land the torch-bearers of the new movement are hard pressed. Here is no petty question for party whips and chapel deacons; here is a cause for which men can live, yet where is Mr. Belloc to-day? Now, if ever, should he be in the arena, but as I have said, he is in his Cave of Adullam. For

his own comfort, one can only hope that it has been well censed to avoid any contamination which may have been left by its original Jewish occupants.

Some there are who say that Mr. Belloc stands for himself alone, but that is injustice. One kind of unity he understands; it is the unity of his church. One high vision he possesses; it is the vision of the French Revolution. The combination has possibilities so magnificent that one would not lightly dismiss it, but it has never been blessed by fortune, and it is as suspect beyond the mountains as it is in the Jacobin Club, or, indeed, in almost any known habitation of men which lies between. Behind every man who believes that by it can the world be regenerated, looms the sad and warning figure of Felicité de Lamennais fleeing from La Chenâie into the wilderness. The cap of liberty hoisted on a cross is a standard which has before led to catastrophe. The lesson was learned long ago. One does not go to Mass wearing a *carmagnole*.

THE ANARCHIST

IT is not easy for an Englishman to understand either the character or importance of the Anarchist. He is one of those persons of whom a precise misconception has long been established. His eruptions have disturbed our common round of existence no more than have those of Vesuvius, but the stage and fiction have made us imagine familiarity with him. In moments of panic the average special constable or citizen guard might be tempted to arrest almost anybody who wore a cloak and had dark hair and eyes and a swarthy complexion. Trading on these romantic fancies, the National Union of Railwaymen some months ago published a sketch of a presumably typical member, to which was affixed the legend: "Is this man an anarchist?" The question was, of course, rhetorical, and, as they say in the Latin grammar books, expected the answer "No." Mr. Dyson had drawn an individual stripped to his shirt-sleeves, and surrounded by his family. Landing in America, he might have been classed as a desirable type of Swedish emigrant, but

here we recognized him as British to the core, and the desponding droop of his moustache was conclusive sign of his integrity. Had its ends been waxed in the style affected by Mr. Cramp, the picture might have had a mixed reception. But the cartoonist knew his public. It was sheer bad luck that his honest workman did, in fact, facially resemble a once notorious terrorist of the name of Koenigstein, although it in no way detracted from the success of an excellent piece of pictorial propoganda. In popular imagination this man remained everything that the anarchist was not.

In childhood I was taught that bombs were as necessary to the practice of anarchy as a bat and ball to a game of cricket. When I was able to carry out a little independent investigation, I found this was not strictly true. I discovered that certain persons, such as Reclus, Prince Kropotkin, and Mr. Bertrand Russell, whilst evidently anarchists, were in many ways model citizens to whom Europe must presently erect monuments. The pages of Proudhon positively assured me that the Social Revolution would come with enlightenment and not with explosions. I began to see that I had not only been led to malign anarchism, but to underrate

it. Regicide and such-like incidents were, I gathered, mere pranks of the irresponsible, meant at most as tweaks to the nose of organized society. The big men might condemn them for reasons of policy or humanity, but they despised them because they themselves had much larger schemes in mind. Nobody with a head on his shoulders thought that the removal of a king or two or even the assassination of a private citizen who had offended delicate sensibilities by buying his clothes at too good a tailor, was bringing nearer the year one of freedom. The anarchist with a brain was the first to deride such foolery. Tweaking at society might amuse boys, but his ideal was its total destruction.

Mr. Bumble, who was a beadle all over, once let fall the remark that the law was an ass, and it is not for a moment to be supposed that he was suffering from what Mr. Frederic Harrison calls the *virus Snowdenicum*, or from any of its earlier varieties. Parochial officers of his standing have always been immune from such irritants. In part, one may account for his aphorism by the fact that he was a "literary character," but chiefly by the assumption that he held it to express an obvious truth; and a truth must,

indeed, be obvious when it can be assimilated by beings as widely sundered as a beadle and an anarchist. When Fourier said that civilization was the enemy, he and Bumble were in virtual agreement, for law and civilization are generally regarded as interchangeable terms. Only a few years ago, it was possible to find excuses for the Fourier state of mind, or to blame it solely for its pessimism. Civilization seemed to have come to a dead end where one could but see Park Lane on one side and a slum on the other. The "Empire of old Mammon," despite Carlyle's prediction, looked to be as strong as ever. Mr. Nevinson, with all his specialized experience of revolutions, could write that a revolutionist need never be afraid of going too far.

Wealth and the State between them controlled the machine from which daily bread issued. Half the population seemed too inert for action of any sort, and the herd spirit could be trusted to unite most of the remainder in crushing the divergent rebel. To say that one saw the anarchist's point of view need not mean that one endorsed it. He beheld civilization much as an artist beholds the Albert Memorial. Here, he said, is something irremediably bad; let it be destroyed. Yet, with these fine words in his

mouth, and, perhaps, finer visions in his eye, he had deep in him a sickening feeling that the destruction would never be. All he really expected was that, if he could distribute enough mental dynamite in the crowd, a few of the excrescences on modern society might be removed. His speech and methods were strong, but in practical politics he was less dreaded than the mildest mannered liberal reformer. The era of successful revolutions, as distinct from military risings, seemed to have definitely ended. Except in Russia, few thought it worth while even to attempt revolt.

Happily, however, a country without rebels is unimaginable on this side of the millennium. Even if England possessed none demanding immediate attention, our natural craving nearly succeeded in inventing several. When Mr. Asquith was solving a constitutional crisis by methods which to anybody outside the legal profession might have seemed pedantic and meticulous, he was hailed as the engineer of a daring *coup d'état*. To reach the front rank of contemporary revolutionaries, it was only necessary to commit a nuisance in the presence of a press agent, and Miss Pankhurst and Sir Edward Carson did not let their opportunities

slip. Churchwardens signed insurgent covenants and premeditated treason. Women with proved records of domesticity threw stones at windows and liked to hear the glass break. It took, indeed, an experienced rebel to realize how much of the noise was stage thunder, and that the big drums being beaten were, if possible, hollower than big drums usually are. But to him it was evident that such sounds would not bring down the walls even of the jerry-built Jericho in which civilized society was sheltering. Most of the cacophonists were members of the garrison out for a half-holiday.

Where the true-hearted and dejected rebels of those days were most in error was in their belief in the sagacity of Governments. They saw their enemy's overwhelming superiority in organization. Their propaganda, whether by word or deed, availed nothing against it. It did not occur to them that society and its rulers were about to hold a gigantic *auto-da-fe* in which their whole citadel was to be set in flames and brought to ruin in the hope of securing the salvation of some of its inhabitants. In his wildest dreams, the most ferocious anarchist may have imagined himself with enough explosive and inflammable material to produce some such

holocaust ; but he had believed himself a monopolist in dreams of that description. We now know how wrong he was. Two or three autocrats, with most of mankind as accessories after the fact, did the anarchist's work for him, and did it thoroughly. After the years of war, what is left of civilization is small and fragmentary. The only useful task left is carefully to pick over the pieces, certain that many must be rejected, but hoping that some worth preserving may be found.

Standing in the world's wreckage, it is self-evident that the anarchist has lost his *raison d'être*. I have heard it said of some pompous buildings that their destruction has been, at least æsthetically, a gain to mankind, but I have never heard it said that they could be further improved by planting a dozen more shells in the wreckage. For the rebel there is to-day as much need as ever, and far more scope. All originality, all progress, is rebellion ; all creation, if it be anything more than repetition, is rebellion. Without it, we should still be in the stone age, or, rather, should not be recognizably human at all. It is the leaven which prevents us all from becoming permanently lumpish. But the modern rebel, like many

other people, can afford to own that his spirit has been chastened by events. If his chief or only interest remains in destruction, it is because he has neither learned nor forgotten anything in the last five years, and his place is with the Bourbons. Anarchism as preached by Godwin and Bakunin might have been salutary if practised in their own age, but intelligence rejects it in ours. The more slowly moving mind of the honest workman in Mr. Dyson's picture has but recently discovered it. Potentially, he is an anarchist. If the remains of society and its laws are not so pieced together as to give the lie to Fourier and Bumble, he will be the most dangerous anarchist there has ever been.

SONS OF TOIL

WITHIN the last few months I have read some dozens of articles which professed to examine the causes of labour unrest. Some of them were instructive, but, taken together, they were confusing. Whether they found the reasons to be economic or political, whether they blamed the greedy capitalist or the grasping socialist, there was not one of them whose writer did not seem to be at least a little lacking either in acumen or frankness. Only a partial truth was ever told. Nobody appeared willing to admit that behind almost every strike as motive power was a genuine, heartfelt, dislike for "base, mechanic toil." We have been taught that Adam delved when he had been expelled from Eden. For close on six thousand years, according to the most conservative estimate of time, man has been engaged in manual labour. It had never, perhaps, been seriously questioned until the present year that this was a permanent state of affairs.

On the other hand, there are signs that it had always been resented by the most enlight-

ened races. Had men been blindly industrious animals, there would never have been an institution of slavery among the Greeks. Pharaoh would never have had his trouble with the Israelites. In our own highly developed country, hard labour would never have been decreed as a punishment for crime. Even the oft-told tale of the industrious apprentice, when properly analysed, leads to the same conclusion. To the best of my recollection, that youth began his career by working twelve hours a day, with twenty minutes off for lunch. The second chapter ought to have told us how he worked for thirteen hours, and reduced his luncheon interval. The whole story should have been one grand *crescendo* leading up to the point where only a religious scruple prevented him from working twenty-four hours on the seventh as well as on every other day of the week. Truth, however, will out even in a narrative with a moral. The apprentice, as we all know, finally became a member of the leisured class, and had others to work for him. No hint is given that he was inconsolable. One is left to gather that the only excuse for toil is the hope of obtaining eventual ease.

In a book written by one Louis Martin, a

French Anglophobe of the nineteenth century, a statement is made which to most readers may seem rather like a feeble joke. The author declared his conviction that we were what he called "a feminine race." At first glance that sentence has only a flabbergasting effect. England has so long been personified by sturdy John Bull, and France by such a variety of charming ladies, that a reversal of the rôles strike one as preposterous. M. Martin, however, explained himself with some ingenuity, and the force of his arguments has been gradually brought home to me. Just, he said, as women subjugate men for the sake of having bread-winners in the house, so do the English bring other races into their empire in order to exploit their labour. It would be easy to show that the illustrations he used were as unjust as they were ungenerous, but his main contention would remain. Deep in him was a belief that we had a natural propensity, amounting almost to a genius, for making others do our work. He named the Jew as our only possible equal or superior.

Certainly the Briton who returns from Africa or India is apt to say, with a somewhat lordly air, that this or that is not a white man's job. Not precisely an idler, he has come to the con-

clusion that certain occupations which involve the merely mechanical employment of his hands and feet, are unworthy of him. It has never been necessary to take his idiosyncrasies very seriously. He has been treated as an exceptional being, probably the victim of some obscure tropical disease. Usually the possessor of a pension or a fixed and independent income, his fastidiousness has not disturbed the labour market. We are only beginning to recognize the truth about his state of mind, and, even now, we scarcely dare to speak it. What if he were not exceptional? What if he were simply the man who had the courage to say what for generations we had all felt? What if half the world's work be derogatory to a white man, or to any sort of man who respects himself?

For a long time one has heard of the dignity of labour, but I am afraid that phrase has always enshrined a polite fiction. At the best it has been the exaggeration of a mole hill of truth into a Himalayan chain of humbug. Were the British people to be made judges at a show where prizes were to be given to the most dignified personages in the British Islands, I cannot help thinking that the highest award would be made to Mr. Speaker. In the privacy of his home

his energy may be unbounded. Within the circle of his intimate friends it may be an open secret that he does physical training on all fours, or has a hobby in gardening. Unknown to any of them, he may have, and with difficulty suppress, a longing to steal out at night and help in sweeping the streets of Westminster, or, in the early morning hours, to take a hand with the porters at Covent Garden. Our whole idea of his dignity is simply founded on what we can see of him in public, and he serves to illustrate our latent belief that dignity and immobility go together. Were it otherwise, we should not insist on wrapping him up in robes carefully designed to impede all bodily activity, nor should we place on his head a wig which would cumber any honest workman. Instead of seating him in a glorified armchair, we should expect him constantly to patrol the gangways, as a policeman patrols the Embankment, now and then laying a hand on the shoulders of members whom his perambulations failed to keep awake. Finally, to show he was not work-shy, he would be as ostentatiously inseparable from his mace as an old-time navy from his pick. Allowing it to lie untouched for hours on the table would be the signal to a

horrified House of Commons that Mr. Speaker had downed tools.

Sceptics can put the whole matter to a very simple test if they so desire. Let them first think of some task which they commonly pay others to execute for them, and, for preference, one which will make them perspire and make them dirty. Cleaning the kitchen chimney is as good as any I can recommend. Next, let them go and do it, and, then, let them present themselves before their usually respectful and dutiful children. The reception they will get may be either one of contemptuous horror or of such laughter as few but Mr. George Robey can habitually provoke, but in either case it will convince them that the dignity of labour is as yet insufficiently appreciated.

The same lesson is enforced by the cases of those who from time to time voice the miseries of the middle classes. Popular novelists and others who are passing poor on their four-figured incomes do not enter into this discussion, but the three-pound-a-week man whose calling necessitates a frequent change of linen is significant. In theory he is attracted by the happy affluence of many manual labourers, but does he ever strive to attain it by joining their ranks ?

Does he willingly bring up his sons to be plumbers, miners, engine-drivers, or ploughmen? On the contrary, he proves himself capable of every heroic sacrifice in order to prevent them from having to follow the comparatively profitable occupations of these others. Should one of them, gripping his courage in both hands, determine to abandon coat and collar for the sake of better wages, it almost always means emigration. Such shame must be hidden in distant lands which have not our standard of seemliness. All the while, too, the ambitious children of the well paid workmen are hastening to enter the overcrowded, underpaid band of those who keep up appearances at the cost of keeping down their appetite. To talk of a disappearing middle class is absurd. Even if it cease to breed, it will never lack recruits. Make no mistake about it. The class which is disappearing is the class of those whom we used to call the horny-handed sons of toil.

It is, of course, a bewildering situation with bewildering prospects. In the last century, the "great triumph of fact" was Coketown, the hive of industry. You might hate it, but there did not seem the remotest possibility of getting away from it. Every one of its swarming popula-

tion seemed also to be a fact ; taken collectively they were about the hardest fact in creation. The system under which they lived might be detestable, and could, perhaps, be bettered, but that it should perish utterly seemed inconceivable. The picture of an England in which there was neither toiling nor spinning would have been treated as Utopian. Bare mention of it to any man of common sense would have provoked the immediate request to face facts. "How," he would have asked, "could England or the world get on, if the majority of mortals did not toil and spin?"

I have not found an answer to his question yet, but I am facing facts, and the fact of the hour is that the world's work is not being done, or, anyhow, no great part of it is being done in Britain. Perhaps we are the feminine race we have been called, but there seems no immediate prospect of finding a masculine race willing to support us. The ghost of the horny-handed one merely gibbers at us. "After me," he says, "the deluge." After all, he is not the first despot to make that remark, yet the earth is still habitable in places.

THE ORANGEMAN

SOME seven years ago I was in Ulster. Were I to write that seven years ago I had been in Bedfordshire, Birmingham, or Berlin, and had observed this or that, I should be rightly told that my observations had for some time ceased to have any bearing on practical politics, and, in that curiously constructed phrase, reminded that "there had been a war on." No such objection, however, can be raised to my Ulster memories. In that part of the world they have a different scale of historical values, and, among the Orangemen, its most vocal representatives, things are much as when I saw them last, and not very different from what they were in the years of the Boyne and Aughrim. One of Sir Edward Carson's latest contributions to Irish debate has been to liken Sir Horace Plunkett to an individual who gained some notoriety in the past by trying to betray Derry to King James. Into the justice of the comparison one need not go, but it appears to be far-fetched; fetched, in fact, from two hundred years ago. A character

in "Mr. Britling," once spoke of Sir Horace as a doctrinaire dairyman, showing that, despite political virus, she kept an open eye on current events, including co-operative creameries. But the Orange leader will have none of this cant of modernism and living and learning. He is angry because some people in England have lately altered their ideas on the propriety of resisting the law by force of arms, and tries to abash them by proclaiming that he never changes his views. Will some opponent please strike a blow at the Belfast linen industry by never changing his shirt, and trying to persuade the public to follow his example?

Seven years ago I saw in Ulster squads of respectable citizens forming fours almost as well as the average British Territorials of those days. No secret was made of their accomplishments, and I saw no reason to doubt that they had almost as many guns as they told me they had. Possibly they have as many now, and probably they drill much better, for many of them have been in the regular army. That they are as dangerous as they were is, however, untrue. In those days, they thought they had British opinion behind them, and that their front line would consist of British bayonets. One of their

leaders boasted that they had the professional army in their pockets. In certain eventualities more than half the senior officers on the active list would have asked to be relieved of their commissions, and many of the juniors were willing to go further. Young men who had only played at war were daring, and the women they met at dances were encouraging. A military friend of mine, who knew nothing of politics and cared less, but was a hot Nationalist when roused, put his name to any number of covenanting documents when he was given to understand that the cursed English Government meditated some harm to old Ireland. A couple of years later, when his battalion was sent to the Ulster Division, he made amends by leading his men into their new camp to the tune of the Shan Van Vocht. However, in 1913, the situation was really formidable, and the Orange leaders did not hesitate to exploit it. "What we want," said a colonel of volunteers, "is to frighten our little king." He never put an envelope into the post without sticking on the back a red, white and blue seal, inscribed with the motto, "Support Loyal Ulster."

The fighting spirit of the Orangemen may be as strong as ever, but in other breasts it has

weakened. Most of us have had a surfeit of war, even including those who, so to speak, were born soldiers. General Gough has become a champion of conciliation, and whatever chieftains may repair to the Curragh of Kildare, he will not be of them. Sir Henry Wilson, one fancies, may, after his friendship with Marshal Foch, have come to think more charitably of Papists. With the income tax at its present level, and the price of clothes still soaring, Lady Catherine Milnes-Gaskell might have fewer customers than of old for those orange lilies she used to sell in aid of Ulster's plan of campaign. The time has been when the Orange Lodges could look for a good deal of support from financial interests in England, anxious to embarrass any Cabinet of which Mr. Lloyd George was a member. That desire is dead. Stalwarts of Belfast, Ballymoney, and Ballymena, have proved what splendid soldiers they are, and have made great sacrifices in a great cause. Also, they are deeply religious, but neither courage nor creed prevents them from having a due respect for Mammon. The time has come when if Ulster were to fight, Ulster would not be right in expecting her battle to be a paying proposition.

Visitors to Belfast can never avoid seeing

the Town Hall. Usually, there is an Orangeman present to say that ninety per cent. of its cost was paid in Protestant money, and he generally adds the information that ninety per cent. of the paupers in the local workhouse are Catholics. I once questioned a member of the Order on what were his real fears for the future under Home Rule. He began by contrasting the native Irish unfavourably with Kurds, Albanians, and other strange folk who were then held to be first-class practitioners in frightfulness. He ended by saying that a Dublin Government would reduce the number of posts he had a day from three to one, and he let me know that that would be bad for his business. Amongst Orangemen money talks. It talks even more loudly than Sir Edward Carson. Merchants and manufacturers may consign the Pope to hell before breakfast, but they like to find their letters waiting for them at the office afterwards. Nobody dreams of asking the War Office or the Admiralty to coerce Ulster. It is the Postmaster-General who holds the key to the situation. Men who would sing "Boyne Water" if the great gun of Athlone were pointed in their faces, would sing small after a week's interruption of mail orders.

Coercion, even postal coercion, is a thing of which one is sorry to talk, but the Orangeman is making himself a nuisance. The eternal drumming by which he keeps his convictions hot is an abominable din in other ears. One is tired of his talk about Aughrim and the Boyne and his other glorious victories, not forgetting Dolly's Brae, that disreputable scuffle where his grandfathers killed an idiot boy. Others say sarcastically that Queen Anne is dead, but were one to telegraph the news to Ulster it would presumably cause turmoil, for there still seem to be places there where her accession to the throne has not yet been notified. Eminent divines have cried out against the habit of toasting King William as almost akin to the Popish practice of praying for the dead, but your true Orangeman merely says, "A fig for the Bishop of Cork," spits on the floor of the lodge hall, and takes another drink to the memory of the Great Whig Deliverer. A few years ago an Ulster pastor talked of asking William's aid for his threatened flock. Unkind people said he meant the Kaiser; of course he meant the Dutchman.

Those of us who live a little more in the present or future feel that the Orange ghost

T H E O R A N G E M A N

must not be allowed to stalk the land much longer. For obvious reasons, one cannot hope to put it to rest by the usual formula of priest and holy water, but in days which are already dark enough "putting out the sunrise with a bucket of the Boyne" cannot be endured. The ghost has done too much mischief in the past, and it threatens more. It still scares timid souls by standing in every alley that can lead to peace and friendship with the Irish people. A ridiculous survival of seventeenth-century bigotry, it pits itself against an understanding with the United States and the consummation of man's noblest hopes in the League of Nations. Sir Edward Carson has stood easy whilst thousands of Lutherans are handed over to the rule of Catholic Poland. His simple followers are taught that a raffle for their watches has already been held at the chapel against the day when Ireland is a nation once again. That is why the Pope has such a bad name in Portadown.

Seven years have added only one argument to the Orangeman's stock. He says that he has fought for the Empire, and so can do what he likes in it. The same thing has been said by colliers, policemen, and burglars in respect to

their several intentions of striking or working, but the convenience of the rest of the population must occasionally be studied. "We will not brook interference in our affairs," says Sir Edward Carson, late law officer of the Crown, "by any country, however powerful." Roger Casement in the dock said, "Put me before a jury of my countrymen." Both made the same mistake. Neither realized the great truth of our times, that no country, not even Ireland, or a part of it, lives to itself alone.

THE DAILY NEWSPAPER

THERE are two opinions about the newspapers of to-day. According to one, it would be possible to improve them; according to the other, it would not. The latter is the opinion of the cynic. Personally, I owe much to newspapers, and am fond of them. For the good of my health I have worn them next my skin under a damp shirt, and in ill-constructed huts have used them to keep out wind and snow. Both at home and abroad I have lighted innumerable fires with them. When living in districts uncomfortably close to the fighting area, I have walked miles in order to see what Mr. Garvin or Mr. Gardiner thought about the war. Once, when camped on Salisbury Plain, I was given an unforgettable thrill by picking up a paper and reading in it that at that very moment of the day it was high water at London Bridge. If I had but a penny in the world I should consider spending it on a newspaper, in the hope that it would sustain me longer than the amount of food, drink, or tobacco to be bought for that sum. The daily

press, indeed, seems to me to be such a necessary institution, and in essentials so admirable, that I find it hard to fathom those who can jeer at it without wishing it better.

In the days of our forefathers, a just and general pride was taken in the newspaper. Information was presented with sobriety and with some apparent reference to its importance to the nation. By no chance whatever were the deliberations of Parliament treated as secondary to the matrimonial squabbles of persons who would have lived and died in obscurity had they not entered the Divorce Court. The affairs of even a minor foreign State were not dwarfed by the account of a prize fight at the National Sporting Club or a football match at Chelsea. Art and literature were still given almost as much attention as the "sport of kings." Comment on the news always seemed to be addressed by a man of intelligence to his peers. Bitterly partisan it may have been, but there was meat and marrow in it, and the bitterness was scarcely more than sauce to a sound dish. Enlightened children of the twentieth century may be out of sympathy with the high Toryism of Gifford in the *Standard*, and with Eyre Crowe's radicalism in the Dickensian *Daily News*, but these men

did represent great volumes of opinion in the country. Their ideals were, probably, the highest in their respective camps. They believed, too, that it was a leader-writer's duty to lead the public and not merely to chivy it by writing words which, if spoken, would sound like the opening of ginger-beer bottles. Most important of all, they knew whither they were leading; they had a policy.

For the change which has come over journalism in the last twenty-five years, many reasons have been given. The most amusing is that which attributes it to the scattering over Fleet Street of Jowett's pupils, and the most common is that we live in a democratic age. Neither explanation satisfies me. It was not, I fancy, the flower of Balliol which first decided that Balfour Must Go, that Tariff Reform meant Work for All, or that the Liberal programme would be more attractive without its two final letters. But if Oxford is not to have the credit, is it fair to saddle democracy with these things? That persons who work in pits should have no desire to follow the thoughts and acts of Lady Sneerwell and the British Plush Protection Society, so faithfully reported in the *Morning Post*, is fairly obvious, but it does not follow that

“the working man” has much less literary taste than “the aristocrat who rides and shoots.” Cheap reprints of the English classics rather suggest that the former’s tastes are different, but not lower. At first he may have been deluded by hearing that a new species of newspaper had been devised for him, but he should by now have discovered that he only represents one of the three classes at which it was aimed.

The other two were the professional and commercial men who think they are too busy to read, and the women who want nothing but the *feuilleton* and such items of news as resemble it. It was mainly these two classes which set the fashion for what the so-called “popular” newspaper should be. Homeric accounts of league competitions and the struggle for cups may, indeed, be sops to the proletariat, but the other columns are not primarily designed to catch the labourer’s coppers. Those who believe that a healthy press makes for a healthy nation should realize that the worst enemy is he who claims that he has only time to skim the paper. For him have truth and logic been curtailed in head-line, leaderette, and snappy paragraph. Let none be deceived by his pose of weary Titan. His overtaxed brain can still concentrate

on the intricacies of a game of bridge or of form at Newmarket. His overwrought nerves still permit him to dance to whatever substitute for music a jazz band may provide. It may be impossible for a writer to discuss him without some of that prejudice which I imagine a qualified physician feels for the confirmed taker of patent medicines, but, to give my opinion for what it may here be worth, I believe him to be one of the greatest impostors of our age.

Feminine influence has been less baneful. The page of fashions can be easily avoided by those whom it does not concern, and there is no compulsion to read the great, new serial by Miss Ruby M. Ayres. The column of social gossip, which connects Suburbiton and Mayfair as by a Bridge of Sighs, is but an extension of the old court circular, and there is no proof that the more spiced chronicles of scandal are provided for women only. If we take decreasing pride in the press, the person most to blame is the busy man with lazy mind. A perverted edition of *Oliver Twist*, he asked for less, and less was given him. Keeping in view the three classes of buyers for whom the modern journalist was to cater, the Harmsworth brethren and their imitators sought and found the lowest

common denominator of the three types. The genuinely democratic newspaper does not yet exist. Even the staff of the *Daily Herald*, though it include Mr. Siegfried Sassoon himself, has failed to create it. That a daily paper could be both intelligent and popular was, however, once proved by that group of writers who at the beginning of "the change of things" made the *Star* shine so brightly.

Too much, perhaps, has been said of, and against, the newspaper proprietor. So much talk may one day force him to put on his hat with a shoe-horn. He is engaged in a commercial venture, and, if it succeeds, his profits are, from the commercial point of view, justification of his methods. All one can reasonably wish is that he could be brought within scope of some Food and Drugs Act which should restrain him from selling deleterious matter, and compel him to include in his wares a fixed percentage of mentally nourishing substance. Still less are the members of his staffs to be censured. They are at least as intelligent as those whom the gallant Captain Shandon gathered round him to start the gazette which was to be written by gentlemen for gentlemen. The only fresh fault to be found with them is in

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their belief that everything about a newspaper matters more than what is written in it. Composition of a leading article is, for instance, now regarded as of minor importance. Whether it shall be printed on the first or fourth page is, on the contrary, treated as crucial.

Here again, I see the alleged busy buyer intervening. As he does not read, it clearly matters little what is written for him, but, as he has been seen occasionally to turn the sheets, the question of "make-up" is vital. Find a way of sparing him that trouble, and your fortune in journalism is secure. So much attention being devoted to this one pampered personage, editors and others have not been required as of old to formulate definite policies in regard to the politics of the State. I can still depend on the *Daily Telegraph* to behave in all circumstances with propriety, and, at least once a week, to bow to Buckingham Palace. I can, also, open the *Morning Advertiser* in confidence that it will not have weakened on temperance questions. Elsewhere, consistency is to seek, yet there is a certain new nervousness in Fleet Street. One part of its population has long played see-saw twice a day, but in certain quarters there is another tendency to be seen. There

is an inclination to sit on the fence, less because it is a fairly comfortable seat, than because of the sporting chance that one may eventually fall on the right side. This nervousness, this taking thought for the morrow, is a sign of grace. It hints a new-born idea that, after all, newspapers are not only printed, circulated, sold, and finally utilized in the by-ways of domestic economy, but may sometimes be read and inwardly digested. If that idea can be driven home, it may occur anon to some influential person that they should once again be made worth reading. High hopes of immediate change cannot, however, be built. Horace Greeley hailing the press as "sunbeam of truth" and "chosen champion of freedom" still seems one half inflated fool and the other half deflated humbug. The future of the newspaper depends on whether the next generation is educated to spell out sentences or to the point of being able to read.

THE ACTOR-MANAGER

THE actor-manager—and under this general title one must place the prevalent actress-manageress—has had a long reign. Without troubling about archaic details, one can begin to think of him at the period of the Bancrofts, for everybody knows what they did for the only Profession which spells itself with a capital P. They obtained it social recognition. Chronicles tell us how they cleared the green room of all the old rogues and vagabonds, and instituted half-guinea stalls, from which one portion of well-bred humanity could gaze upon another, sensible that, though the footlights divided them, they were united by a bond of correctness in clothing, accent, and demeanour. The “poor, degraded stage” ceased to be the occupation at mention of which a dame of right feeling must draw her shawl about her figure; and in due course came the first theatrical knighthood. In public esteem, the theatre has been raised almost to the level of the brewery.

Adam Smith once explained that the “exorbi-

tant rewards of players" were paid not only for the rarity and beauty of their talents, but also as recompense for the discredit attached to those who offered them for public hire. With the sting of reproach removed, there was reason to be hopeful. When actor and actress could emerge proudly and by light of day from their lairs in St. John's Wood, it should have followed from the economist's theory that they would be almost supercilious about money matters. Exiles in Bohemia they had needed compensations, but now surely had come the time for high thinking and plain living. In short, they could devote themselves to the advancement of art, and for some years audiences were hypnotized into believing that our native genius had found new life in Robertson's cup-and-saucer comedies, whilst the Lyceum Shakespeare was, of course, given the reverence owed to fragmentary remains and relics of the great departed. To individual pieces Clement Scott gave his blessing or refused it, but in an era of general complacency, nobody suspected that things were about to happen, of which the like had not been seen since the days of Etheldred the Redeless. Then, Ibsen and the Vikings in their dragon ships came up the Thames, with Mr. Shaw for pilot. The

theatre was in labour; "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" was produced.

Further historical details are not needed. Our actor-managers, with carpenters, costumers and other allies, have rather carefully avoided making history, though four or five more knight-hoods stand to their credit. The hopes engendered by Adam Smith's words scarcely seem to have been fulfilled; but, if much money has been gained, much also has been spent. He who aims at becoming Sir William de Stratford suffers, it may be, from an over-developed conscience. He can well be imagined saying to himself that it will not be fair if the honour fall on him when he has risked no more than half what his last knighted brother had pledged to fortune. And so it is no use to present him with a play which would be good if it had not the cardinal defect of being inexpensive. No use to ask him for a Shakespeare without cuts, since that would leave no time for the ballets and the tableaux and the scene-shifting by which alone the gilt edge can be put on Elizabethan gold. Only if he can feel that his production is the costliest in town will he sleep in perfect calm. Awake, he lives like Damocles, with a sword ever ready to fall on him. When it

has fallen, quite gently, on his shoulder, and he has been bidden rise as Sir William, he is too old or too honest to change his methods. He will even spend a little more than he has spent before.

The old Puritan who cried, "Behold the sumptuous theatre houses, a continued monument of London's prodigality and folly," was, of course, an enemy to the drama; yet its warmest friends repeat the cry to-day. Within the last twenty-five years a number of brilliant plays have been written, and, in spite of everything that is said of low public taste, several of them have proved to be commercial successes, not, perhaps, of the mammoth type, but as profitable as the ordinary bedroom farce, which has lost its wit in crossing the Channel. Although it was Sir Herbert Tree who told us not to despise the valour of indiscretion, it is not to the West End managers that we owe our first acquaintance with Shaw, Houghton, or Drinkwater, to mention only three writers whose work has already won popular applause. One is tempted to question whether Sir William and his brethren really know their own business so much better than do the literary hotheads who offer them so much gratuitous advice. *Hindle Wakes* can be seen to-day on the "pictures," and I take it that

admission to the repertory of the cinema is strong token of a play's popularity ; but it had to dribble from Manchester to the London stage doors by way of Notting Hill and the Stage Society. But your knight, or would-be knight, dare not risk a shabby little failure in work-a-day dress. If he is not exactly a knight errant, he has something of the spirit of the Cavalier, who, if he had to fall, wished to fall in purple and fine linen. Rather plaintively he tells us from time to time how much he would like to do a little crusading, but it is always evident that his apparel is in the way. If he learnt nothing much from Ibsen, he at least seems to remember the moral of Dr. Stockmann's case, that a man should never put on his best trousers when he goes out to battle for truth and freedom. And so he either stays at home, or goes out to battle for something else.

In choice of parts, as in choice of plays, lack of acumen is often displayed by the actor-manager. Shakespeare is said to have played Benvolio because he was bald and had a head shaped like an egg, but one has seen a modern Romeo whose only clear qualification was an amorous imitation of Juliet's habit of speaking and saying nothing—anyhow, nothing audible.

Also there have been strange Falstaffs, reminiscent only of the man in Poe's story, who went mad with the idea he was a pumpkin, and persecuted the cook to make him into pies. But I can fancy some reader asking pertinently why so many attacks are launched on poor Sir William, or questioning whether the stage is in worse state than, say, literature. In the first place, I would answer frankly that going to the theatre merits exceptional rewards, because it is accompanied by exceptional penalties. For various persons it may entail one or more of several unpleasantnesses, such as booking seats, or standing in a queue, changing clothes, going out at night, realization of the traffic problem, a too hastily eaten dinner, deprivation of tobacco, sitting next to a young woman whose opinions on life and toilettes one had not originally paid to hear. That is why an indifferent play annoys one more than a bad book, and one reason why actor-managers are more assailed than publishers.

Accidental trifles may make one's demands more exacting in the playhouse than elsewhere, but the real complaint against the actor-manager is that he is by profession an actor. Of the wholly commercial entrepreneur one has no right to make a grievance. The box-office is

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the all-sufficient guide for him as to whether, for the nonce, the dashing automata of Edmond Rostand shall hold the boards in place of what the Americans call a girl-and-music show, and it is natural for him to direct his plans accordingly. To the artist turned administrator one cannot be equally lenient. Every one of his offences is assumed to be a sin against the light within him. Yet, when he deigns to answer the fault-finders, he neither shows the smallest sign of penitence, nor does he appeal to human sympathy and humour with a wink. On the contrary, he quotes Shakespeare for the defence, lets fall the name of Garrick, poses as a priest of deep mysteries, and speaks contemptuously of literary pedants. To every objection he has a ready response, each excellent in its way, though perhaps mutually destructive if taken together. Defending the star system with a phrase about the "happy inequality of man," he is the blandest aristocrat. Confuting the high-brows by a count of seats, he is the complete and indignant demagogue. He is incurable, but the cause of the drama is not lost. Because there are some who still believe with Webster that "such vices as stand not accountable to law should be cured as men heal tatters, by casting

ink upon them," one must still sharpen pens against him.

When rumours came from Moscow of the art of one Gordon Craig, and, as the rumours grew louder, the actor-managers of London were seen to be pricking up their ears, somebody suggested that Sir William ought to spend a month abroad out of every twelve. Would not eleven be better? A good deal of his holiday, long or short, will be spent in Paris. Four weeks will only allow him time to consider what of the Palais Royal fare may be suitable for adaption, whereas in the longer period he could learn how the French act the pieces of his choice. On his return home, he would receive an ovation which might induce him for ever to leave Shakespeare alone. The strictly commercial producer would fill the ordinary bill quite capably in his absence, and somebody else would have a better chance to deal with such plays as interest the captious but not inconsiderable minority.

THE SUPERMAN

“**W**HAT is the ape for man? A laughing stock or a source of painful shame. And that is what man must be for the superman.” There is always a part of the human race that enjoys being cuffed as much as another part of it enjoys being patted. Even a single individual may read with satisfaction in Shakespeare that he has God-like apprehension, and half-an-hour later be listening with comfort to Dean Inge. Perhaps there is in every man a consciousness that the buffets are meant not for him but for his neighbour, yet I fancy there are some who actually take pleasure in being called worms of earth or compared with chimpanzees. However that may be, the average mortal was by no means offended when the German professor whose words I have quoted began to preach Supermanhood as the world’s goal. Until recently we accepted his teaching without protest, or only objected when his countrymen claimed a monopoly in superiority. Only from the Devil in Mr. Shaw’s play did a word of warning come. “Beware,” he said, “of the

pursuit of the Superman ; it leads to an indiscriminate contempt for the human." As a rule one does not quote approvingly the sayings attributed to this personage, but it has always been admitted that there are times when he should be given his due, and a Shavian Devil is exceptional. I am glad to think that the human element in the world is beginning to assert itself again, and to wonder why it so long submitted to contempt.

Doubts exist as to how and when the idea of the Superman was first popularised in England. Some time before Mr. Shaw and Mr. Wells had won anything more than literary recognition, the idea was in the air. It can be felt in the most widely read novels of the late eightennineties. Seton Merriman's romances abound in strong, silent men who would have been dull dogs on the mortal plane, yet were accepted as heroes by patrons of the circulating libraries. Why poverty of conversation should have been taken as a sign of genius, or of anything but the lack of something to say, is beyond me ; but taciturnity was for a while the rage. One Continental celebrity was particularly admired for being silent in seven languages. To chatterers whose tongues had never been curbed by the

smallness of their own vocabularies, he doubtless appeared unnatural. It needed but little to make him seem supernatural.

More sophisticated portions of society were soon to be prepared for the coming of our conquerors. Gradually they were accustomed to the mention of Nietzsche, but the rising sun of the Far East at first attracted more attention. Strange Oriental words began to creep into the English language. A little earlier, Japan had been the provider of tasteful crockery for decadent tea-drinkers, and a little later she was to be a dangerous competitor in textiles, but for the time being her export was the heroic theory. Pedagogues inculcated the manly virtues by calling their pupils' attention to her knightly code, and a fair judgment of a man's age can still be made when one has heard whether he was brought up on Japan or Sparta. In the sixth form and at the universities the new cult brought glory and some satisfaction to those who followed it. It not only excused, but positively ordained, a thoroughly cavalier treatment of fags, freshmen, and anybody who did not happen to be in one's own exclusive set. Vulgarly, one might be called "blood," "athletocrat," or whatever else envy dictated to those

whose socks and souls were invariably of the wrong shade, but from socks to soul one knew that one belonged to the *Samurai*.

The newness of this new aristocracy was a point always emphasized. Its members were quick to deny any mental relationship with the Came-over-with-the-Conqueror people whose pretensions had already worn threadbare. Theoretically, one might be a new aristocrat and a boot-black, but in practice it was well to have an unearned income, since the right spending of it could take so much of one's time and thought. It was not always a path of roses for the young *Samurai*; floral carelessness in life was not for them. Supermankind denied that the lower orders had any rights, but on itself it imposed duties. How to be in the forefront of Bond Street's fashions without encouraging anybody in an unproductive occupation was just one of the troubles to be faced earnestly. How to be "equestrian" whilst driving the most powerful Panhard then on the market was another. The *bushido* of the adolescent Englishman was a very complicated business.

The really serious difficulty, however, lay in the fact that none could settle satisfactorily how the new class should be recruited. No

sooner had hereditary principles been rejected than a new set of hereditary principles had to be adopted. If man was something that had to be surpassed, one had to think about breeding Supermen. A commonplace of debate was the future government of the country by a House of Lords with scientifically selected pedigrees. In the literature of the subject, such words as "wife" and "marriage" were seldom used, but "mate" and "mating" were of constant occurrence. A due regard for coming generations was thus displayed, but the needs of the present were not wholly forgotten. Several educational establishments began to announce that they had a staff of experts in teaching the art of aggression. Specimen testimonials showed how, after a course of twelve postal lessons, an office-boy could glare a managing director into giving him a rise of five shillings weekly, and how hitherto unsuccessful men of letters had brow-beaten editors into refusing columns of advertisement in order to make space for their effusions. What happened when two fully trained aggressors met each other was always matter for speculation, but, though these educational ladders all led to supermanhood, their lure was mainly for those[^]_{Est} who, at the beginning of the

ascent, possessed middle-class minds. Others neglected them from a mastering conviction that they themselves were premature births of the awaited master race. Disdaining the old fetish of representative institutions, the new aristocrats assumed the purple and its privileges after having quite simply selected themselves.

Many of them were, and still may be, heroes to their valets. It would be hard to think of any other class of beings in whose estimation their stock has not sunk, but at the outbreak of war we were all more or less under their thrall. "Wanted, a Man" was a cry which revealed our confidence that the Supermen were ready and waiting for the invitation to save us. For a while the public saw none but Lord Kitchener. That he was a capable soldier and an excellent organizer, is generally agreed, but his supremacy was not due to the qualities he is now granted. The public was awed by his reputation for silence. His colleagues were over-awed because he could silence others. Since those days we have seen pass the train of his successors. Lord Northcliffe, voluble in seven—or seventy—newspapers, followed by force of reaction, and Lord Beaverbrook, last of the Canadian barons,

had his spell of fame. Sir Auckland Geddes, fearlessly changing "definite" into "definitive," and then burning the pen, has finally proved how far the supermind can soar beyond our weaker understanding.

Germany, too, has had a long list of Supermen. She deserved them, but it revives my belief in German good-nature to note how many of them are being allowed to write their own epitaphs. War was thought to be the one thing necessary to show the world the worth of the higher intelligence, of the *esprit fort*. The old, old story was told again; only the exceptional beings, the Alexanders, Cæsars, and Napoleons, ever made history. Curiously enough, the war has served to restore faith in democracy. In all the armies, common soldiers and obscure regimental officers acquitted themselves with more than ordinary credit. Thousands of undistinguished civilians evinced capacity in their limited spheres of influence. Only in the higher commands, military and civil, did ordeal by battle find many weak spots. Faith in democracy, by the way, need not mean faith restored to any particular one of its sects. From the Superman's standpoint, Mr. Walter Long is even more hopelessly of the crowd than is Mr. Lans-

bury, and of all those whose names Sir Bernard Burke so carefully catalogues, there were never more than a dozen or two standing head and shoulders above the masses. Even Mr. Wells, in whose *New Utopia*, the Superman played so large a part, has gone far towards recantation. I shall always remember that monstrously efficient individual in *The Research Magnificent*, who would not take a walking tour in Surrey without "several sheets of the ordnance map," yet so nearly caught a severe chill through forgetting that the English climate in April does not allow one to sleep with impunity under nothing but the stars. What better illustration could one have of the supermind's blind side? And yet, as another Shavian character said in answer to the Devil, "the superman is a fine conception; there is something statuesque about it." I wonder whether the statue with which for all future time we shall connect it, will not be the wooden idol of Hindenburg, decaying in Berlin?

THE DOMESTIC SERVANT

CERTAIN ghosts there are which trouble us by too often appearing ; others can only be evoked with extreme difficulty and by conjurations and sacrifices. To the latter class belongs the domestic servant. She, for it is with the female of the species that most of us are concerned, like others of the genus ghost, is peculiarly shy of suburban villas, country cottages, and the smaller flats, showing some preference for the statelier homes of England, where, presumably, she can be more bounteously entertained. Sceptics aver that she does not exist at all, but their denial is in the main cynicism. Others affirm that, after due invocation, she has appeared to them in the likeness of that efreit in the *Arabian Nights*, whose hands were as winnowing-forks, and that they, like the King's daughter, have cried, "No welcome to thee," and have engaged with her in mortal combat.

By legend, picture, and tradition, it is proved that she once existed in the flesh. It has been

handed down by our mothers that she performed a number of useful functions, and comparison of her storied past with modern instances is conclusive in showing that the being with whom we have to deal now is at best but a wraith. Her departure from mortal life is mourned by many. Those who seem to have been the most to blame for it are often loudest in their lamentations. Approaching the question with an open mind, one cannot deny that the whole business of the domestic servant has for a long time been abominably managed. A few years ago it could have been cited with equal effect on the platforms of Mrs. Pankhurst and Mrs. Humphry Ward. To the party of the former it would have served as a strong argument to rebut the contention that woman's proper sphere of activity was in the home, whilst the anti-suffragists might surely have claimed that as women had failed in control of the one department entrusted to their care, further extension of power was likely to be disastrous.

Idyllic tales of domestic bliss in bygone times must be taken with some caution. The majority of them merely express the opinions of employers, and even the employers were far from unanimous. Strife between mistress and maid began with their

first relations, but, as long as the demand for women's labour was limited to few callings, the mistress had, in more than a figurative sense, the whip hand. Thomas Fuller, a worthy of the seventeenth century, left it on record as a proverb that England was the purgatory of servants. We know how during the Fire of London Mr. Pepys had time to be incensed against the girl Mercer who, without formality of notice, had fled to her mother's house, and how Mrs. Pepys tracked her, soundly beat, and finally dismissed her. A few years afterwards Mrs. Hannah Wolley in her *Guide to the Female Sex* was deploring that in "this depraved later age" the tide of corruption and self-indulgence had overtaken Abigail, whilst Colley Cibber flatly stated that "in all the necessaries of life there is not a greater plague than servants."

The cloud of witnesses could easily be increased, but from all the evidence only two conclusions can be drawn. In the first place it will be noted that at no given moment of history are servants ever as good as they have been. Secondly, that whilst they were yet comparatively good, no right steps were taken either to improve them or to keep them as they were. The chastisements of Mrs. Pepys were as ineffective

as the catechizings of the Countess of Warwick, her Puritan contemporary. Nobody seems to have realized that the combination of body and soul in cook or housemaid did actually make the sum total of a human being. On the contrary, it was widely and notoriously held that a good servant's three properties were the back of an ass, the tongue of a sheep, and the snout of a swine. The very word servant, sharing common ancestry with the adjective servile, is objectionable, and it has certainly not been bettered in the modern slang of slut, salt, or skivvy. The French *bonne*, with its amiable, even flattering, suggestion, is altogether pleasanter, though whether it could be truthfully applied to-day is another matter. Maybe the German *Poltergeist* is the correct designation for sundry domestic assistants by whom the twentieth-century house-wife is haunted. Maids they may be called by courtesy ; servants by custom ; domestics by irony.

Whether even now the human side of the question is fully understood is doubtful. Miss Honeyman, in *The Newcomes*, had a curious habit of calling all her servants Sally, in complete disregard for the expressed wishes of their god-parents. She was a dear old lady. One reads of her that she admired the word gentle-

woman more than any other in the language, and made all around her feel that such was her rank. One cannot imagine that she would have willingly wounded the feelings of any living creature, yet among the trivial things of life I know none more annoying than to be called by a name other than one's own. It grates when it implies confusion with another person; it grates more if it means that one is merged in the speaker's imagination with the class to which one belongs, since all classes, as their members know, are, taking them in a lump, bad. Miss Honeyman, at the worst, was thoughtless, but recent correspondence in the newspapers shows that a new generation of employers shares her failing. Violet, Petunia, and Keren-Hapuch have all written to express their indignation that on entering "service" they have been deprived of their baptismal names and dubbed Mary Anne or Jane. Sensitive, class-conscious imaginations have seen here an affront. Their names, they fancied, did not accord with the humility expected of retainers, and the change was designed to take them down a peg or two. I am not sure that they were wrong. Snobbery comes near to being chief and most cherished of our national vices.

Another point of difference lately made public is the question of dress. The maid servant is in revolt against the wearing of cap and apron, and a wall of solid opposition here faces her. The mistress, when approached on this subject invariably sidetracks discussion by saying that this changeless uniform is most becoming to its wearer. She talks, in fact, as though she were the most masculine of uncomprehending males. On any night in the week cast an eye on the chronicles of Corisande in *The Evening Standard*, or the musings of Olivette in *The Evening News*, and you will discover that what is becoming is only a secondary consideration in woman's wear. Novelty is much more important. No two English words go more easily together than change and fashion, and, indeed, without the first one would scarcely gather what the other meant. George Morland's painting of "The Family Maid" is a charming and beautiful picture, though in some "places" exception would be taken to the *décolleté* style of her gown, but it is none the less true that the uniform of cap and apron has long ceased to satisfy those who are supposed to wear it. As Signor Marinetti said of Parsifal and the tango, "*ce n'est plus chic.*" Is not Abigail also a daughter of Eve?

THE DOMESTIC SERVANT

Wages and hours of work have never been at the bottom of the difficulty, so one need not dwell on them. In other occupations they have caused grumbling, unrest, strikes, but they have never brought about the disappearance of a whole class of workers, and, despite occasional apparitions, it is clear that the domestic servant is likely soon to be as extinct as the dodo. Is it too late to recall her to life? At least for the sake of the aged and infirm, it is to be hoped that something can be done. There is nothing particularly degrading or unpleasant about household labours, but if they are to attract the young women who have tasted liberty they must be ordered with more sympathy than even the modern Mrs. Pepys seems willing to show. In that quality the very best mistresses always seem to have been lacking. Moreover, the hostility of an old feud still lingers. "Do not rashly believe a wife complaining of servants," wrote Dionysius Cato in an early century of our Christian era. Dare one venture to suggest that the hour has struck for male intervention? Men never understand women; women understand women just well enough to dislike each other.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS

LORD ACTON once praised the House of Lords for its "wish to carry into the future the things of the past," and for its "capacity to keep aloof from the strife and aims of the present hour." With variations, his words are still used by our cautious constitutionalists whenever the mending or ending of the second chamber is mooted, and they still carry weight. After the barbarism of war, some of us are more than ever inclined to cling to our old civilization. When Mr. Tom Mann tells me that Parliaments have served their purpose, all the *bourgeois* blood in me runs cold, and I begin to ask for the shelter of serried ranks of coroneted persons, yet on second thoughts I realize that they form a dangerous salient in our line of defence. I do not know if anybody has yet noticed the inverted resemblance, but a Soviet is simply a House of Lords turned upside down. The House of Lords implies government by one privileged class; the Soviet simply means government by another. He who pleads for the first will before long find himself inadvertently pleading for the

other, and it is safer for those who would preserve a link with the past to remember that there is also a House of Commons, a fairly venerable institution, which needs their aid against the raging heathen. In Asquithian days, defenders of the Upper House habitually belittled the Lower, and I hope they are pleased when they hear their taunts echoed by the platforms of the extreme left.

Quite possibly they do not hear them at all. The capacity of the peers to keep aloof from the strife and aims of the hour is truly wonderful, but I am not sure that it is a good recommendation for them. It may account for more than one mistake they have made. One ingenuous scribe has written that their chamber is to the living what Westminster Abbey is to the dead, and we have recently heard Viscount Astor's protest against his premature burial. The atmosphere of funereal pomp and monumental dignity is inimical to sympathy between governors and governed. I am almost afraid that it will be as difficult for me to interest my readers in a discussion on the gilded chamber and its occupants as in a dissertation on extinct volcanoes.

For months on end we live in forgetfulness of the House of Lords. Even when in session, its

debates rarely receive more than a brief notice in the Press. In one way and another its individual members are brought more or less prominently before the public by their births, deaths, marriages, and divorces, or by their activities in philanthropy, philosophy, war, trade, and sport, but as legislators they seldom trouble us. They do not, you see, seek notoriety after the fashion of low-born demagogues. Only on great occasions do they assert themselves; only at hours of crisis do they muster in force. Usually they are content to be represented at Westminster by about a fifth of their number, who themselves ordinarily refrain from doing more than move mild amendments to measures in which the public is profoundly uninterested. Their modest abnegation is a perpetual surprise to foreigners, but to us others its purpose should be evident. Whilst the House of Lords is doing nothing in particular, we are almost all agreed that it is doing it very well, and we let sleeping peers lie.

The adventure with the "People's Budget" was so calamitous that it gave their lordships a lesson in circumspect behaviour. If ever they call attention to themselves to-day, it is to proclaim their impotence. "Look at us," they say.

“ How fallen from our high estate ! How powerless to protect you from the unfaithful Commons ! ” Every now and then the need for a stronger second chamber is impressed on us by persons whose passion for the Constitution at home is only matched by their zeal for military dictatorship abroad, and we are warned that since the Parliament Act there has been nothing, absolutely nothing, between us and the ruinous passions of the multitude. Many a good citizen must often awake in a tremble at thought of a bulwark destroyed, and yet, if he will examine the matter coldly, he may discover that the Upper House has not been quite as idle and as feeble as its friends and members would have him believe. The case of Ireland is very much to the point. Had it not been for the lordly function of delay the Home Rule Act would have been in force before either the Kaiser or Carson could disturb the peace. Sinn Fein would still be elucidating early Gaelic texts. John Redmond might still be alive, and living would be the firm friend of England and the League of Nations. Three years of licensed obstruction were long enough to make England again too late, and to give red revolution its chance. Blame the Westminster Abbey atmosphere if you will.

Not yet has the time come when the House of Lords should be either forgotten or forgiven. Although its head may be buried in the sand, it is foolish to forget its presence. It is still strong enough to do us harm, and it is also weak enough to do us harm. Few maintain to-day that it in any way approaches the ideal of a second chamber. Mendel's law has shattered the faith which our simple ancestors placed in a hereditary legislature. Mendel may have been just as fallible as the rest of our law-givers, but his theories have been so widely accepted that we cannot altogether ignore them. Heredity, according to him, is a much trickier business than we used to think it. Except in the art of legislation we no longer affect to put any trust in it. We know that Lord Hawke used to be a first-class cricketer, but we never expected him to command the North Sea Fleet. We know that the Duke of Leeds is descended from a draper, and the Earl of Dudley from a goldsmith, but we feel no confidence that they would "make good" at their ancestral trades. Before long, of course, England may see certain of its noble lords displaying marked talents for musical comedy or amassing dollars, but in no individual case would it be safe to bet on such a reversion.

Cecils and Churchills with the characteristics of their great progenitors are, indeed, amongst us now, but even these modern instances afford no help to defenders of the peerage. Whilst the family titles have descended according to the law of primogeniture, the abilities which should have accompanied them have most inconsiderately cropped up in the cadet branches.

Since Haselrigg, stout republican as he was, declared his preference for an Upper House whose members "depended on themselves," the hereditary principle has never lacked its champions. Under pressure, they admit that the peers may be dull fellows, but, say they, the secure tenure of their seats gives them independence. Calmly, and without truckling to the mob, they can plan their country's good. Were this the whole truth, I should have nothing more to say, but somewhere in the argument I suspect a *suppresio veri*. Is a peer's independence really greater than mine or the next man's? True, that he has no need to go seeking votes, but there are some persons, notably his banker, to whom he is in tight bondage. When our great soldiers and sailors are ennobled, grants have to be made to them lest their progeny should bring their titles into disrepute by poverty, and these

“signal marks of favour” seem to be arranged strictly on a scale of rank. To each of the two earldoms created for active services in the late war a sum of £100,000 was allotted, and half that sum to each of the three viscountcies, whilst the four military barons had to content themselves with £30,000 a piece. The figures speak for themselves.

Lord Morley of Blackburn would, I fancy, be yet a commoner if he had not been childless. He, it was realized, would to the end of his days be able to live in circumstances which, if not luxurious, would not be exactly penurious, but grandchildren of a man of his means might easily become bank-clerks, and their offspring fall to manual labour. The House of Lords and all those who maintain it understand that it can only exist on its present basis as long as its members “keep up appearances.” More than most sections of the community, they are bound hand and foot to money. When poverty comes in at the window of a noble mansion, it is the recognized duty of heir or owner to bring in an heiress at the door, so can we expect a peer’s vote to be freer than his choice of a bride? Were any large section of the peerage to let appearances and the wherewithal go hang, the lower

middle classes would cease to bow and the days of the Lords would be done.

Wealth, even if it be only the modest wealth which can keep neither a steam yacht nor a racing stable, is the corner-stone of the Upper House. Let us have done with talking of independence, and examine another witness for the defence. Experience, I am told, has proved some sort of second chamber to be advisable. Incidentally, it also shows ours to be by no means the most maleficent in the world. Cromwell called a unicameral legislature, "the horridest tyranny that ever was," but, of course, he had no prevision of the United States Senate. The tyrannies and follies of majorities are deplorable, but they are as nothing to those of minorities. If the people of Yorkshire were to show a brutal disregard for the lawful aspirations of the people of Rutland, I should protest against such injustice, but were the positions to be reversed I should feel that frantic absurdity had intensified the wrong. In America, however, they put up with that sort of thing daily, and in their Senate the broad, but mostly uninhabited acres of Wyoming and Nevada can at any time defy the population of New York or Pennsylvania. Of course, it is their own affair, but I do not think

we shall imitate their “masterpiece of the constitution makers.” Any sort of Senate, however, has, I suppose, to be accepted as better than no Senate at all.

The ideal second chamber does not exist, and I doubt whether one can be devised, but, having written on the House of Lords, I shall be expected to produce a scheme for its reform. Let us agree with Cromwell that one chamber is not enough, and think experimentally. What about a Senate with an educational test for candidates and voters? I am not sure whether I did, or did not, originally draw this idea from Gilbert and Sullivan, but, anyhow, I am not ashamed of it. I did not adopt it until I had compared it with the senatorial systems of several countries, and had found it less ridiculous than most. In Britain, Sweden, and the Netherlands, the qualification is monetary. In France and Italy it appears to be approaching senility. In Norway it is hygienic—the voter shows his vaccination marks. Under the scheme I have elaborated from Strephon’s sketch, all voters must be up to matriculation standard, and candidates would have to show themselves capable of taking at least a pass degree in some subject of their own selection. The main difficulty

would be to secure impartial examiners. Could we expect Mr. J. A. R. Marriott to be quite fair when marking Professor Gilbert Murray's paper on the "Growth of the British Empire"? And if the rôles were changed would not Professor Murray find himself in an unpleasant position between the devil of imperialism and the deep sea of temptation? I see the flaws in my proposal, but willingness to prepare for the examinations, and to sit for them, would be splendid proof of civism. Perhaps the chief merit of the scheme is that it will never be put into practice.

THE PUBLIC HOUSE

OVER no English institution could the word "Ichabod" be more aptly written than over the Public House. Our taverns and inns, with their richly storied past, should command from us something more than common respect, and we ought to be able to grant it them without regard to our taste in drinks. Agnostics and Seventh-Day Adventists unite in instinctive reverence for the old cathedrals wherein their common ancestors have worshipped, and those who prefer water to the stronger liquors should, with the rest, be able to honour those hostelries wherein so much of our native genius was nurtured. Pious pilgrims from America, reared on legends of Tabard, Mermaid, and Blue Boar, visit our inns as dutifully as they visit Westminster and Stratford-on-Avon. If, in the end, they go home more resolute than ever to support prohibition, who can wonder?

My comparison of church with ale-house may in these days seem to smack of profanity, but such was not always the current view. An actual bond between the two used not to be

considered scandalous, nor was it limited to the urgent task of returning to Parliament a candidate favourable to both their interests. In hundreds of parishes brewing was under the superintendence of the clergy and the wardens. It was the duty of the latter to buy malt for the wakes, and of the former to see to it that at feasts of the church the ale was well and wisely consumed. As the ensuing profits were commonly set aside for the relief of the poor, the arrangement seems to have suited everybody. In further proof of the lively interest taken by those of godly life in the bodily welfare of the laity, retailers of the liquor which made glad the heart of Englishmen were under the specially benevolent protection of St. Theodotus who, prior to his martyrdom, had himself been a member of "the Trade."

Only in our own times has the idea of a "dry" England come even on the borderland of practical politics, but the degradation of licensed victualling has been a long process. It began soon after the Reformation, and the stern, strict zealots of the next century frowned on such churchmen as still gave a blessing to conviviality. It is not to be wondered at that their disapproval culminated under the Protectorate. Cromwell,

let it be remembered, was both a Puritan and a brewer. Am I wronging him if I fancy that he foresaw how religious disapproval would presently aid his business? Licensing legislation has failed to make our people sober, for the simple reason that it has never been based on the people's will. Puritan and brewer have generally seemed to pull different ways, but of their joint responsibility for the present state of the liquor traffic in our country, and in the lands we have colonized, there can be no doubt. It is now so bad that persons in whom there is ordinarily no trace of fanaticism are almost ready to advocate its complete extinction. At one time it has been regulated by Puritans who have hoped to empty the Public Houses by making them as sordid and wretched as possible. At another it has been regulated by the brewers, who have known that the more miserable the bar, the more would its frequenters drink, and the more prosperous would be the brewery.

The poet Shenstone, who found his " warmest welcome at an inn " has frequently been pitied. Unhappy in many ways he may have been, but, putting his reminiscences to the test of modern experience, we are like to find that he was in one way enviable. I cannot truthfully say that I

have ever detected much warmth in the reception given me on licensed premises in England. My requests for a drink in exchange for so much copper or silver have usually been met, but it has been a business transaction of the most formal order. Here, perhaps, I should own that my purchases have usually been modest. Persons who consume champagne are, I understand, occasionally privileged to shake hands with the landlord, or, if the regularity and quantity of one's potations atone for their inferiority, one may, I am told, receive from him a word or a nod. The stranger—the man for whom inns were originally designed—must not expect such favours if his orders run only to half-a-pint of bitter. Should he have other wants which are not alcoholic, it is well for him to conceal them. The hungry man demanding bread and meat will be curtly informed that he has come to the wrong shop. The tired traveller asking for a chair will be made to feel that he desires something for nothing, and had better go to a philanthropic institution.

For the degeneracy of our hostelries, the poor publican ought not, however, to be blamed. In nine cases out of ten he is merely an employed person. He dreads chairs and food be-

cause those who sit and eat in comfort consume less liquor than others who tope in the perpendicular position favoured by his lord and master, Mr. Bung, He distrusts strangers because their vagaries may get him into trouble with the law. He abhors merriment, because a single sober merry-maker is more dangerous to his licence than a dozen silent, sodden creatures who find no joy in their cups. To attract custom, he may place behind his bar a woman with piled hair and powdered nose, but in conversation or flirtation with her he sees that the real business of the house may be neglected, and he is energetic in curbing the young man with a tendency to drink only with his eyes. When a customer has drunk all he can be induced to drink, his room becomes preferable to his company. In some taverns the traditions of hospitality are openly disavowed by a printed notice to the effect that in a place of business it is well to do one's business quickly. Returning from abroad, I am able to wonder why Samuel Johnson so triumphed in England's felicity in inns, or claimed to Boswell that the French had none as good as ours.

It is not, however, only his testimony that we have in favour of our old hostelries. Publicans

whilst they existed as a race of independent men were people of good repute, and as willing to serve the hungry as the thirsty, since from both they made a fair profit. They were, moreover, sociable beings, and, in the true sense of the word, entertainers. English literature from Chaucer to Dickens is one long testimonial to their qualities, and, whilst men united in their praise, they strove to keep the good name they had won. Only when the brewer became despot and insisted on the monotonous, rapid, and overwhelming flow of liquid refreshment, did they fall in general esteem. Puritans had, of course, always eyed them askance, but Puritanism, after all, had been but a blight on national character. Its attempt to divorce soul and body, and so to usurp the place of the Angel of Death, had been rejected by our more healthy instincts. As for the innkeeper, whilst the good Vicar of Wakefield and such worthies thought it no shame to frequent his house, he was not greatly troubled by the kill-joys. Now he is without stay or comfort. Even those who support him for political reasons would be scandalized to see a cleric at his bar. His house is officially declared unfit for children. Convention forbids a self-respecting woman to cross his threshold.

American "spell-binders," bent on extending compulsory teetotalism from their land to ours, are in our midst. They would have a comparatively easy task were it not that the Labour Party, much to the disgust of all prophets of the pump, is talking of nationalization and will soon insist on public houses being run in the public interest. As it at present stands, the Public House is an epitome of all our native vices. In the first place it stands for commercialism and inebriety. Its saloon bar exemplifies our snobbery, and its private bar our hypocrisy. Tolerance of the public bar and all its reeking squalor merely shows to what craven state industrialism has brought the masses. Yet I believe we shall in time muster enough good sense to destroy the Public House of to-day without submitting to a "bone-dry" England. In France one soon grows familiar with a poster which represents the drunkard and his family, and on which are written the words: "*Quand supprimera-t-on l'alcool?*" It is not total prohibition for which the sane French reformers are asking. In the land of light beers and the vine, they would laugh to scorn such furious folly, but I have begun to question whether there are any temperate people in the English speaking

ances. Probably they exist, but the brewers and distillers, ably supported by Mr. Pussyfoot, will not let them be heard. Longfellow, once a force in moulding American thought, wrote that "Bacchus was the type of vigour, and Silenus of excess," and I shall always admire the New York clergyman who, a while ago, dared to tell Dr. Saleeby that, despite all laws, the working man would in the end insist on having his beer. It was not the first occasion, and, perhaps, it will not be the last, on which a representative of religion has upheld an unchanging verity against a scientist's ever shifting bigotries. In modern England, however, it is to Labour one must look for deliverance from Bung and the fanatics.

"Love of temperance," Mr. Balfour has said, "is a polite name for hatred of the publicans." Such a remark from such a man almost makes one despair. Would he have said that love of peace meant hatred of the soldier, or that sanitary houses were built from a dislike of the physician? Love of temperance is hatred of nothing but intemperance, and this would be plain to the meanest intelligence had not Liberal and Tory, Puritan and brewer, emmeshed the question in a tangle of party politics, prejudices,

and profits. I do not even hate brewers, but I do resent them having been allowed, and actually encouraged, to grow fat during the years when so many of us were growing lean. In one year of war the Allsop firm multiplied its profits by five, and Messrs. Ind, Coope, actually increased theirs a hundredfold. With beers of low gravity I have no quarrel, but I do object to paying exorbitant prices for water. The soaring value of brewery shares provokes natural indignation, and gives "Pussyfoot" his chance. There is almost universal condemnation of the system on which "the Trade" for years past has been conducted. But why in the name of temperance should we cut off our noses to spite somebody else's face, or deny our thirst its due to annoy the men who have already annoyed us more than enough?

THE POOR LAW

IN the train between Fenchurch Street and Tilbury, passing through districts which are neither blessed nor beautiful, I set myself to read one of the little grey books. Do not jump to the conclusion that it was a publication of the Pelman Institute, and that I was learning how to become a colonel at twenty-seven or a member of Parliament at twenty-eight. It was only a "Reconstruction Pamphlet" issued by the Government, yet it encouraged me to hope that if I were to become a pauper I might get better treatment than was given to the paupers of the past. It was entitled *The Reform of the Poor Law*, and it should, perhaps, be added that its author was a professional optimist. He had a childlike belief in Royal Commissions. He seemed to fancy that their reports presaged extraordinary activity, whereas practical experience teaches that about a month after issue they are commonly mislaid in departmental lumber rooms. Further, though the writer was well informed, he seemed to me to have a secretive temperament.

With the famous "forty-third of Elizabeth," for instance, he dealt too briefly, for, despite its fame, the contents of this Act are not as well known as they ought to be. After the dissolution of the monasteries, poverty and distress grew rapidly in England, and the law was an honest attempt to cope with a social situation that had become alarming. Seeing how it has been administered at various times, including our own, there are some who imagine it must have been a bad Act. Others, who have troubled to read it, have concluded that it must have been repealed before they came into the world. Both assumptions are incorrect. As Acts go, it is a remarkably good Act, and it is still on the statute book. Unfortunately, candidates for the Board of Guardians have never been obliged to pass an examination in it as a test of their eligibility for office, nor have electors ever extracted from them a promise to carry out its provisions in the event of their candidature being successful.

Were some of its forgotten clauses to be put into practice, we should imagine there had been a revolution. One of them positively ordains that the Guardians shall set to work all those who have no visible means of subsistence, and shall raise

weekly from the parish such sums and materials as they require for the purpose. The intelligent reader may ask whether this does not constitute a "Right to Work Act," and I am bound to reply that it does. For over three hundred years we have possessed this "measure of socialism," and have forgotten to have it executed. Were we to start now, there would be a great outcry from ratepayers, private employers, and the aristocrats of the Trade Unions, who would see all their particular interests threatened if able-bodied paupers were productively employed. Whilst we remain the two hostile nations of rich and poor, of which Disraeli wrote, the old Act must stay a dead letter.

The Elizabethans who drafted it were what we should call men of very advanced views. They went as far as to say that the children of those who were unable to maintain their offspring must be put out as apprentices. They did not say they were to be unloaded on the market as casual labourers, or sold into slavery as in the days of Bumble. Using the word "apprentice," they clearly meant the young pauper to be prepared for following a skilled trade, which would give him as good a chance in life as had the children of a prosperous artizan,

From this same Act I gather that Boards of Guardians are neglecting their duty when they do not build houses in which the poor can live. Nothing is said about erecting the sort of gaol in which the paupers of the parish are now commonly herded. The Elizabethan extremists had in mind the building of separate cottages for separate families. One is almost driven to conclude that their design was to restore self-respect to the needy, rather than to make relief an engine for destroying its last, tattered shreds.

Some day a reformer will arise to demand that, instead of another Royal Commission, we are given the Act, the whole Act, and nothing but the Act. Meanwhile, let us admit that its framers and early apologists were sadly ignorant of what we call sociology. Take Sir Mathew Hale for example. He figures in history as having been, among other things, a persecutor of witches, but I am only concerned here with his defence of the lines along which the poor in his age were being helped. There were, he said, a number of weighty reasons for their relief, among them being love of God and one's neighbour, and also because, as he had noted, poverty weakened the fibre of men. His opinion on this last point has, of course, been questioned.

Most of us have been taught to believe that it is not poverty, but its relief, which creates moral weakness. Perhaps our teaching has been false, but, anyhow, I find something very shrewd and worldly wise in another of his arguments. Not long ago there was an economist who said that it was convenient for a part of the population to be unemployed and destitute, as it served for a pool from which labour could be drawn for a "boom" in trade. Sir Mathew would not have agreed with him. Sir Mathew said that if there were a multitude of poor, there could be no long safety for the rich. Had his words been more heeded, Robespierre and Trotsky might yet be unknown to fame, but it is, of course, acknowledged that he was far from being a scientific sociologist.

Guardians of the brighter kind may want to tell me that instead of gushing about Tudor times I should remember that there is such a thing as the Poor Law Amendment Act. I have heard of it. It set up three gentlemen who were disrespectfully called the Three Bashaws of Somerset House. My little grey book says that it "laid down no principles," but it certainly contrived to instil them. It turned the guardians of the poor into guardians of the poor

rate, and so they have remained from that day to this. The great idea drawn from it was that the situation of the able-bodied paupers must be made "less eligible" than that of independent labourers of the lowest class. They could not be given less nourishment without causing them to die of hunger, but they could be given their food in a more distasteful form. Applicants for relief were to be given the "offer of the house," or, in other words, of loss of liberty. Guardians were left with discretionary powers, and "out relief" was not abolished by this Act with no principles, but Boards, remembering their self-appointed task of safeguarding the ratepayers' interests, have a way of deciding that discretion is the better part of beneficence. If they put it to an applicant that he or she must either go without relief or become a workhouse inmate, there is always the sporting chance that the former alternative will be taken. Despite all our Acts, Royal Commissions, and care for the poor, deaths from starvation do occur now and then. When Blackstone wrote of the Elizabethan law, he added that "the further any subsequent plans for maintaining the poor have departed from it, the more impracticable and pernicious these attempts have proved."

In one respect, however, the idea of imprisoning the indigent did show an advance on all earlier policies. It hinted a dawning belief that poverty was a crime, but, by some perversity, it enacted that for this particular crime the victim should be punished. Extension of such a practice might lead to several injustices. I should at least be fined forty shillings and costs were I to be run over by a callous or careless motorist. Some may refuse to recognize the parallel. The late Miss Octavia Hill declared that the thrifty never came on the rates, and that debt and want of character were the causes of pauperism, so, if we accept her evidence, at first glance it may seem that I am wrong in describing our workhouse inmate as more sinned against than sinning. Does he come on the rates from his own fault? Debt is due to various causes, among them being the extravagant tastes in grog and gramophones, to foster which important industries exist. A debt clearly has two parties to it, and, if a debt be a fault, there are two parties to the fault, though the Board of Guardians punishes one only. As to want of character, I must refer again to Sir Mathew. Poverty, he thought, destroyed character, so if we punish people for its lack, may we not

really be punishing them for the accident of having been born in poor homes and bred in poor surroundings ?

The little grey book did not examine these questions. It was remiss in several ways. It told me nothing about old soldiers, though I fancy it was largely meant for their consumption. Going elsewhere for information, I found that a little while before the war twenty per cent. of our vagrant population were drawn from this class. Vagrants had been mentioned briefly in the reconstruction pamphlet. In Russia they used to be called "the bells of God," but in this country, it seems, there is a scheme afoot to place them in detention colonies. These natural gypsies, the people who, traditionally, come of a race older than Adam and are not under that primal curse which makes some of us sweat to earn our bread, are to escape no longer. Perhaps this is as it should be, but I do not like the idea that at least one-fifth of them may be men who have directly served the State. Can the much lauded discipline of the barrack and the square do no better ? The discharged soldier, having been fed on rations by the ravens, taught to rejoice in freedom from responsibility, accustomed only to act on orders, becomes the

casual of the highway. "You are not here to think, my lad," is a saying which from recruit days has sunk into his soul. After all, he may not have been a natural vagrant; yet a detention colony awaits him. With our poor law wiseacres imprisonment is a panacea.

When all room has been left for controversy, it remains that the general mixed workhouse, that stronghold on which all the unimaginative, incompetent, guardians of the rates have so long relied, is in the last crumbling stages of decay. Sir Donald Maclean's Committee condemned it, and it was condemned in the reign of William IV. If all the evidence against it were printed in a single line it would stretch easily from Whitehall to the man in the moon and persuade him to take action. How many more Royal Commissions must give judgment against it? Even those who urge that it is cheap, acknowledge it to be nasty; but, of course, it is not cheap. There are children in it. Often they are in the same dormitory with imbeciles, with women advanced in senile decay, with girls stricken by contagious disease, and they grow up awry. No farmer looking for future profits would keep his young stock in such conditions. "The great fault in our Constitution," said Peter Pounce,

“is the provision made for the poor,” and he bewailed that he himself would come to the parish in the end. His objections to the working of the Poor Law were not the same as mine ; but his final prognostication provides an argument which may make even the most careless interest themselves in reform.

THE SPORTSMAN

THE sportsman is a man who devotes to sport what he considers the best part of his life. He who for the sake of old times occasionally watches a match at Queen's Club, or spends an hour or two at the Oval because the skill and symmetry of cricket appeal to his eye, is unworthy of the title. Equally invalid are the claims of those who in middle life start to go golfing for the good of their figures, and of others who from their youth up have found at tennis a satisfactory way of spending Sunday afternoons in the suburbs. The sportsman despises them as every enthusiast must despise the dabbler and the Laodicean. For him the whole year and all the changes of the months have a meaning which escapes us others. Never has he been able to understand the poet's wish to be in England in April which is a close season and offers only restricted chances even for playing games. Summer he can turn to some account, but he is eager for the fall of the leaf, for not till then will he be able to get to work with the pheasants. Hard

frosts of mid-winter, interrupting his pursuit of the fox, again depress him.

Within reason, sportsmen and poets may both have a right to indulge their tastes. Both are entitled to their opinions on the merits of April or October, but the time has come to realize that neither should be allowed to over-ride the interests of others. Were I to find half a dozen young men had trampled my cabbages and geraniums because from certain points in my garden could be had an exceptionally good view of the rising sun which they desired to greet with an ode, I should receive public sympathy. If I resisted their encroachments with barbed wire, my neighbours would approve my action. If I prosecuted them, the magistrate would commend me for having drawn the law's attention to an outrage, and the fact that I had possibly marred six poetical masterpieces would draw no biting comments from the local Press. Yet, when the trespassers happen to be on horseback and accompanied by hounds, I shall get nothing but execration if I resist or resent them. Should they gallop over my tennis-lawn, and so interfere with another, though, it may be, an inferior form of sport, I should be regarded as a curmudgeon if I protested. Since they would

have been following a fox, my objections would be met at first with bland surprise and, later, with indignation. Formal complaint to the hunt's secretary might lead to a supercilious offer of inadequate compensation, and I should thenceforward be branded as no gentleman.

Sport is always defended on the two broad grounds that it is English and manly. Why "English" I do not know. Sport is as international as socialism. In parts of the world where the fox does not abound, or is treated with contempt, his place is taken by boar, stag, tiger, bull or rat, and all these animals are harried and killed because pleasure is found in harrying and killing them. To describe sport as "manly" also conveys a false impression, but it has a sort of archaic justification. When first our rude forefathers quitted their caves and wattle-huts to slaughter edible animals, their wives were left at home to keep the pot boiling. That these expeditions were agreeable is by no means sure. Not until the human could feel that his weapons of offence and defence gave him a distinct superiority over his prey, did he go hunting for any reason save necessity. When fun began to supplement, or to supersede, hunger as motive for the chase, the Amazon made her appearance in the

field, and she came to stay, though for a while Nimrod maintained a jealous attitude. A meet of hounds without women is now unthinkable, and in nearly all sports, either separately or together, both sexes take active part. Bull fighting is, perhaps, an exception. In Spain they have the curious idea that a contest is unsporting when the odds are more than ten to one in favour of the human competitor slaying the animal without injury to himself. In consequence, the primitive tradition survives that women are better out of the way and as mere spectators of masculine prowess.

English sportsmen often call their Spanish brethren barbarians, and the Spaniards respond by calling us degenerates. Both are right. As I am not a vegetarian, I am in no position to object to the taking of animal life, but from nearly all the blood sports of this country the original excuse or reason has departed. One does not take a Scottish grouse-moor to reduce the butcher's bill. One does not rent a Hampshire trout-stream because the larder would otherwise be empty. None of the motives which would have made shooting or fishing appeal to me is left, and I get my food from shops in the High Street without pretending that I am a

virile creature who has gone back to nature by killing hand-reared pheasants. Two or three times I have been obliged to see oxen slaughtered, and, though the sight was not pleasant, I recognized that humane methods were being used. Death was instantaneous. Infinitely worse things are to be seen if one passes through a covert on the evening after a big *battue*. And yet in our language "Sportsman" is used as a term of praise, whilst "butcher" is abusive.

The hunting of the fox, that most sacred institution against which Oscar Wilde blasphemed, was once also a beneficent act. The fox was recognized as an enemy to the common weal. Slings and bows and arrows were useless as weapons, and the neighbourhood united against him with dogs and horses. To-day, when I see the unspeakable riding after the uneatable, I have a momentary feeling of surprise such as I should have had if I had seen reinforcements with *harquebuses*, instead of the latest Lewis gun, sent against the Germans. The spectacle is picturesque, but it smacks of inefficiency. Speaking subject to correction, I assume that the object in view is to kill a fox or foxes, and I know these vermin are a nuisance to the countryside. A few determined fellows, armed with modern

weapons, could do the work so much more thoroughly, but, of course, there would be lacking that artificial pother which has beguiled Mr. Masefield into forgetfulness of his real manhood. Given a little aniseed, one could further arrange for men, women, hounds, and horses to have as much healthful exercise as ever a fox gave them. When this form of sport was covertly introduced some years ago in a southern county, the master was heartily congratulated on a series of excellent runs. When it became known that the scent had been provided by a specially prepared red herring, people spoke as though a disgraceful scandal had been brought to light. The more I think on the nature of the thing called sport, the more it baffles me.

In many parts of the country, hunting is simply a public nuisance. Its devotees are no longer content with the chance of finding a wild fox to chase, and tame creatures, so little frightened of man that they will raid farm-yards in the middle of a summer morning, are freely turned down in the woods. Their destruction, except in the approved and antiquated style, is regarded as a blackguardly business. It required a legal decision by Lord Justice Coleridge to convince the hunt's followers that a pink coat did not

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make its wearer immune from the ordinary operation of the law of trespass. Although those who ride to hounds are an insignificant minority of the population even in a hunting shire, one is regarded as selfish if from humanitarian or any reasons one interferes with their amusements. The sportman's point of view is, moreover, accepted by the majority. What was good for the community a few hundred years ago is still thought good. We move in thought so slowly.

Nothing about the sportsman is more wonderful to me than his inconsistency. Pitiless to the bird or beast whose pursuit, agonies, and death can bring him pleasure, he still preserves a sort of love for animals. The dog at his heels and the horse he sits so easily both know him far better than I ever shall, and they seem to think him an admirable and lovable creature. An act of cruelty to either of their breeds will rouse him to white heat of fury. His support for any movements to protect bird or beast is certain, unless, of course, it infringes on what he considers legitimate sport. I have an old volume of the *Sporting Magazine* which shows that a century ago, when men's minds were less tender than they are now, he was in the forefront of those

who had begun to oppose certain base cruelties. It is no use to be blind to this side of him, but it gives no proof that his sports are ennobling occupations. All butchers whom I have known intimately have been great lovers of dogs, but it will not be claimed that they learnt their love in the shambles. Into these mysteries of the heart I cannot penetrate. Perhaps the sportsman is simply "*le brute humaine*" that Octave Mirbeau called him. Perhaps he asks no more questions of himself than does the terrier now lying at my feet. Of conscious cruelty I can acquit him. He hates no living creature unless it be a person like myself who tries to spoil his sport by pointing to its seamy side. All he asks is to be let alone ; but it is no use. Time is conquering him. His life is founded on a pretence that what was at the beginning must remain until the world's end, and that human nature ought not to change with conditions of human life.

Bear baiting has gone, and fox hunting will go soon. The more democratic sport of rattling may survive awhile, for Labour candidates are already pledging themselves to resist interference with the sports of the people, but in a few centuries we shall all content ourselves with hunting

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the slipper and shall wonder why our forefathers took such delight in "the image of war." The sportsman, of course, reads the future in another fashion. He is a sentimental atavist who believes, and hopes, that we shall always retain a certain bloody-mindedness. He has the conservative temperament which some call pessimism.

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THE early decline of so lusty a young giant as the one which a while ago Sir George Younger raised before our wondering eyes from its cradle of the ballot box gives cause for justifiable surprise. All the good fairies were present at its birth. Victory was there, and Peace and Prosperity were announced. Liberty came with Dora drooping on her arm, and Equality and Privilege were made to embrace in public. But, as sometimes happens on these auspicious occasions, the bad fairy appeared uninvited, and, according to formula, pronounced her malediction. It was not the first Coalition she had cursed, and it may not be the last. In words which may be familiar to those who read history, she decreed that it should "partake of the vices of both its parents."

What those vices were had long been concealed by all good Party men, but it is not disputed to-day that there were defects on either side. In the Conservative parent was ingrained the vice of doing things. A few years previously it had been exemplified by the organization of

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a rebellion in Ulster. The Liberal parent, on the other hand, had the vice of not doing things, and this had come to the surface in the failure to suppress that same by no means privy conspiracy. In the fusion of the two parties optimists saw a hope that these tendencies would cancel one another, but the wicked fairy willed it otherwise. Under her curse the Coupon Government has laboured from its first days. It has had a passion for large ventures, and its record is studied with great tasks begun. It set up a commission on coal mines, and its composition indicated that it was intended to report favourably for nationalization. The commission did what was expected of it, and then saw its main report set on one side. Subsequent efforts to pacify the Duke of Northumberland without mortally offending Mr. Smillie have, of course, been futile, but it may be argued that they are acceptable to the always moderate majority. Here is a reasonable line of defence. One may discard either from strength or weakness; but study of other hands played by the Coalition does not suggest that Mr. Justice Sankey was discarded for the former reason.

There is a monotonous regularity about some of the Government's doings. Looking to Russia

one is reminded of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's conundrum as to when a war is not a war. When it is a campaign directed by Mr. Churchill and ending in an evacuation is, of course, the answer. The situation in Ireland affords the same proof of weakness. Mr. Macpherson takes his stand for law and order, and law instantly vanishes in martial law, whilst in place of order we are given the sack of Fermoy. Sinn Fein leaders intermittently go to gaol, take a few weeks to recuperate their energies, and walk out again. Sir Edward Carson continues his rampage without interruption. Still nearer home we have had a taste of the Coalition's methods in dealing with the profiteers. On account of those birds of prey Sir Auckland Geddes is understood to have postponed his journey from Basingstoke to Montreal, and one should, perhaps, be grateful to him. His disguise as a scarecrow must have involved no small sacrifice of professorial and family dignity, but that it will alarm any but the smallest and most ingenuous fowls is doubtful.

Firm government has points in its favour, and so has *laissez faire*, for under either system one knows approximately what to expect. The Coalition is consistent only in raising hopes and

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in disappointing them. Even in its muzzling order its timidity was made manifest. Anything for a quiet life is a sound maxim of government, but, to quote Lord Morley, it is not the only sound maxim. Occasionally it defeats its own ends. The railway strike showed how completely it could do so. Nobody believed that the Government meant what it said. Doles and subsidies may placate labourers who do not labour and needy capitalists who cannot support their own industries. They may keep certain deserving classes of the community from being out at elbows, but they react in the end by putting the whole nation out of pocket, and the harmless, necessary taxpayer out of temper. Fear of offending too many people at once, or of setting too many dogs snarling at the same moment, postpones trouble by making it inevitable. It is poor comfort for a Prime Minister to have saved his own skin when he realizes that like Balzac's *peau de chagrin* it is shrinking rapidly all the time.

From the first the Coalition Front Bench looked more like a union of all the interests than of all the talents, yet, on one item of constructive policy its occupants expressed agreement. Their avowed intention was to lead us

into a new world. Others have of old professed the same desire, notable among them being the builders of the Tower of Babel. Then as now absence of a common language frustrated an interesting experiment. There is no need to doubt the sincerity of His Majesty's Ministers, nor the ability of at least some of them. As patriots, they may have buried many an ancient difference, but that they are often compelled to consult an Esperanto dictionary at their meetings I can well believe. Only by some such cumbersome means, I imagine, did Mr. Barnes explain in Mr. Fisher's sympathetic ear the disadvantages of a university training to a democratic leader. Thus, too, must Mr. Chamberlain commune with Sir Alfred Mond on tariffs, and Mr. Montagu instruct Lord Curzon on his Indian schemes. Valuable time must be lost whilst they look up the meanings of such blessed words as "intellectual," "key-industry," or "diarchy," but, with national unity as their object, one should not be too impatient. On these grave colloquies, however, Ministers find it hard to concentrate. They talk and listen as men who are timing the arrival of the next shell. At any moment news may come that the Secretary of State for War has found a

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new continent to conquer, or that the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland is writing a new book.

Whilst the Prime Minister was abroad there was a feeling that these troubles must be taken philosophically. On his return he would set all things in order. That much was taken for granted, yet some were asking where he would be politically, and there was a perceptible note of anxiety in their voices. The question has now been answered. Mr. Lloyd George is found to be exactly where for some time past he has been. He is to be found in the future, which, by all accounts, is a much more comfortable period than the one in which the remainder of us live. We are, I suppose, an unimaginative people. Promise of jam to-morrow ought to fill us with a sort of spiritual enthusiasm, but it only makes us conscious of bodily emptiness. One small house built by Dr. Addison in England attracts more would-be tenants than apply for all the castles in Spain constructed by the rest of the Premier's staff of futuristic journalists and orators.

The coupon candidates were given a mandate to make peace. They have made a sort of peace, and its most promising feature was the work of one who is not a member of the Government,

but we are told it was the best peace they could make. As nobody imagines it can last without several structural alterations, it will be well if somebody else is soon given a chance of effecting them. Mr. Lloyd George fought a good fight at Versailles, but never received the Parliamentary backing on which Mr. Hughes could always rely. He was, moreover, manacled by Ireland, and still wears the handcuffs. In consequence, our lectures to Rumania and any other naughty States who do not know their fourteen points by heart are received abroad with but cynical attention. The voice is the voice of Chadband, but Machiavelli counts ventriloquism among his accomplishments. Our foreign friends know how the English tourist away from the ties and responsibilities of home can abandon himself. They smile when the English sense of justice selects Hungary or Fiume or the Saar Valley as a place on which to descend. The Americans have a blunt trick of speech, but the rest are too polite to mention Dublin Castle.

Public opinion, despite Peel's scornful saying, is not quite a tideless sea. The country may not be seething with indignation at its rulers, but there is plenty of smouldering anger and a quiet contempt with which there is no arguing. The

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tide has set against the Government, and its members are drifting to deep waters on an unseaworthy craft. What will happen? Will the coupon holders decide by majority vote to drop the pilot? Or will the officers and crew decide to throw overboard the superfluous passengers? Will Mr. George, or another, follow the example of Gilbert's elderly naval man by devouring the rest, since by that method perfect unity could be achieved? All these courses are possible, but I do not think it is the *Nancy Brig* on which the Coalition voyages. I have in mind another ship on which once served a yet more famous and more ancient mariner. According to Coleridge it had at one time none but dead men to navigate it.

CERTAIN ARTISTS

“ **A** CREATIVE painter or designer,” says Mr. Wyndham Lewis, “should be able to exist quite satisfactorily without paper, stone, or paints, or without lifting a finger to translate into forms and colours his specialized creative impulse.”

This statement, if it means anything, must mean that painters can cease from painting, and that a creator can count his creation complete when he has told his friends that he has given birth to a new idea. We shall soon hear, perhaps, that the Mansard Galleries have been taken for a show of ideas. There will be a catalogue and frames and a shilling admission, but there will be neither visible pictures nor statuary. From the catalogue the visitor will learn that frame number one encloses somebody's conception of an earthquake in E flat, whilst the table in the centre of the room supports another's notion of the odour of human sweat carried out in white marble. These things will not, so to speak, be there, but if, after a few moments of study, you do not perceive them with all your five

senses at once, you will be branded as an ignorant ass.

Personally, I welcome the prospect of such an exhibition, for it would be the logical outcome of everything that has been preached in the school of non-representative art. It has been insisted there a thousand times that the secret of art is unlikeness from nature. By book and brush they have said it. Observe the portrait of a poet, which they consider one of their masterpieces. You know whose portrait it is, because, with no little pride, the poet tells you about it himself. It is not, of course, what our grandparents would have called a speaking likeness, but despite a malformation of the mouth and a tendency on the part of the left eye to grow rather above than below the accompanying eyebrow, it is evidently a human head. In works devoted to rare and curious diseases, there are to be found photographs of persons who seem to suffer from the same malady. To my way of thinking, this is but a half-hearted picture and must have been painted by an individual without the courage of his or her convictions. If he, or she, did not mean to represent the poet so that he should be recognizable to his friends, it was illogical to paint a head which all the world

could recognize as more than half human. An apple or a pine tree or a centipede would have betokened more sincerity, yet to all three there are objections. Apples and heads are both approximately round, and the other two objects named may both have points of resemblance to poets if only we search long enough for them. The only way to be thoroughly non-representative is to paint nothing at all. Leave a blank space on the wall, and explain in the catalogue what is supposed to be there. When once we have grown accustomed to exhibitions of ideas, we shall be able to do away with the frames, and a little later to cease visiting the galleries. A catalogue by post will be enough. At my writing table I shall imagine the poet's portrait; and in his studio the artist will be hard at work imagining it too.

Unfortunately, Mr. Wyndham Lewis and his friends seldom mean what they seem to say. Their meaning is as elusive in print as in paint, and in all probability they have no intention of holding the exhibition which their theories should foreshadow. Pitifully, they will shrug their shoulders, and say that I do not understand them. So be it; but it is their fault. It is their business to make themselves understood by me

and by mankind, for the day is done when art could be the property of a coterie. Half a dozen supercilious critics and a *grande dame* or two are no longer enough to be a painter's public. Art has to be democratized. Its finer points may be reserved for the few, and its very finest for the creating artist himself, but its mass-impression must be for the world. With art it is the same as with a woman. Something of her should be reserved for her lover alone, something else for the small number of her intimates, but, when she walks in the street, her beauty, and at least a portion of her beauty's meaning, should flash on all who in passing see her.

Art as expounded by Mr. Lewis and those others is as meaningless to me as the law laid down in the office of Messrs. Lewis and Lewis. I am, however, morally certain that the famous firm of solicitors almost always comprehends its own jargon, but I am not so sure that as much can be said for those who used to hold forth in the pages of *Blast*. I will even go further and express a doubt whether any of the vorticist, cubist, hexagonalist, poet-neurotic, neo-diabolic distortions of art are artistically comprehensible to any West European man or woman, or to anyone whose family has lived for three or four

generations under West European conditions of life. Had the war continued for two or three more years, the prolonged horror of it might have eaten right into our heads, and either given us a new sense or else deprived us of some of those senses we still possess. We might have come to believe that beauty was hideousness, hideousness beauty, and that the making of a new hell on the old earth was an aim to which art should substantially contribute. The war ended just in time. Shell shock is susceptible to cure. It is not among our own countrymen, not among the races culturally near to us, that the great innovators are to be found to-day. In the work of a Mestrovic or a Meninski one can see a new world emerging, though the pain of the old world's travail is still about it. Lesser men from the East End of Europe, whose apprenticeship to civilization has, may be, been spent in the scarcely less fearful East End of London, produce what at first sight may seem mere pogroms in paint, but theirs is a comprehensible barbarism. Their honesty is at least as evident as their talent or their genius. They chisel or paint something that in very truth they have seen and felt, and with their materials they reveal to us their visions. Mestrovic's only failure

was his head of Rodin, and that because of Rodin, a West European, we had already a fixed idea essentially different from that of the Jugo-Slav and one that was naturally more truthful. Before the pictures painted by Russians, Poles, or Eastern Jews, I realize that they and I have no common ancestry. Behind them are generations of terror, cruelty, and torture of soul and body; behind me, centuries in which wars, rebellions, and persecutions have been, not the stuff of life, but its scattered interludes. It is impossible to imagine that we could share the same idea of beauty. It is evident that we do not.

These others outrage our traditions with the zest of serfs who burn the lord's hall, of *sansculottes* ravaging Versailles, of rick-burners chortling over the blaze which ends the farmer's harvest.

Manet used to say that one year one painted violet and everybody screamed, and that next year everybody painted more violet. The screaming to-day is not over colours or shades of colours. The new men from the East are nothing if not iconoclasts. The type of physical perfection which Greece saw in a race not its own, is abhorrent to them from memories of repression and victimization. It is not a freak of the studios,

the passing of the golden-haired girl and the blue-eyed boy ; it is the end of a dynasty. It is the end of a dynasty enthroned in Europe through all the ages we call civilized. These alien artists from the far parts of the earth have a significance which bursts beyond frame and canvas. Socially and politically, the least of them are so ominous that questions about their place in art are impertinences.

When their pictures have been shown in France, the French have smiled enigmatically and called them interesting. When a Frenchman has tried to paint in the same style, his compatriots have shrugged their shoulders, called him *fumiste*, and passed by on the other side. In their opinion, he has forgotten what art is. He has, perhaps, confounded soot with paint, but, anyhow, there is no need to take him seriously. In England we have not established a standard by which to judge whether a man is a mountebank or not. There has been an English school of painting, or, rather, there have been many, but we have not settled what is the object of art. We have not, as Sizeranne said, pinned our faith to *le Beau sans phrases, le Beau sans intentions*, and so we are always liable to go astray. When somebody says to

us of his picture that that is "how he sees it" we have no apt reply. We cannot even tell him that a man with his extraordinary perception for the ugly has a choice open between suicide and a visit to the oculist.

But we of the West—French, British, or whatever we be—must keep intact our idea of beauty, and in our art we must pursue it. The non-representative painters, and the painters who are always representing something else, have been anæsthetized. Their orgies in oils may be meant for revolutions in embryo, but they are more like jig-saw puzzles in disorder, and their affectations of Scythian savagery do not even redden Chelsea's lamp-posts. All their deformations of the human form amount to no more than the grotesqueries of nature with which showmen have always amused the vulgar. The half-barbaric art of the East may be the beginning of a new culture, but we can no more acclimatize it in London than we can make the Volga flow by Maidenhead past the Tate Gallery. A sense of humour should forbid the experiment, but our eccentrics are not conscious humorists. They have not even enough of it to carry out their own theories and to hang their empty frames upon the walls.

“The arts and humanity” says Mr. H. J. Massingham, “must become man and wife.” Never, perhaps, have they been further apart than they are to-day. Mr. Wyndham Lewis would have the big public “not taught, but policed,” whilst “the few thousands” must be trained to be “a responsive chorus.” Between these two ideals we shall have to choose, and it is, I think, Mr. Massingham who points to the better, though the harder, way. From the fall of Rome, through the Middle Ages, art kept civilization alive, and art may do the same again now that the barbarian hordes are loose once more. Beauty is nature’s subterfuge for promoting union of the sexes. The artist, too, though he can free himself of “intentions,” will bring the arts and humanity together when creation of the beautiful is his first aim and his last.

DOCTORS AND NURSES

SURGEONS and physicians have frequently been styled the priests of humanity; especially surgeons. Why the surgeon has commanded a greater share of reverence than his learned brother of pill and potion I do not know, but it is certain that his priestly character has more often been proclaimed. Perhaps it has been because he is cleanshaven, or, perhaps, because the multitude still connects its idea of a priesthood with sacrifices of blood. Slowly, however, we are veering towards a new view. Gradually we are beginning to think of the medical profession in a new light. To-day there are some bold enough to say that it would be better for us all if, by legislation or any other means, the men of medicine could be turned from being the priests of humanity into being its ministers.

In the profession itself, the tradition of priestliness is still somewhat fiercely maintained. No claims of Rome have ever been as sweeping. The dogma of medical infallibility is not limited by its application to the President of the Royal

College of Surgeons or to any other single person, but is spread in public view to cover every individual who has qualified to practice the art and mystery and has not actually been unfrocked. In camera, of course, the faults of poor old Dr. Jones, or the follies of young Mr. Brown, may be largely discussed. Mortality among their patients may be terrific, but *esprit de corps* forbids any kind member of the profession to proclaim to all and sundry the truth that Jones is uncleanly, senile, or drink-sodden, or that Brown's experiments, interesting as they are, show more thirst for knowledge than scientific exactitude. Excommunication, the expunging of a name from the register, is a rare event. More often the extreme step seems to be taken for an offence against the profession than for a mishandling of the patient. Doctors, like Popes, occasionally commit crimes, but that they err in diagnosis or treatment is seldom or never part of the evidence put before a jury.

A thousand years hence medical knowledge may be standardized. We may then know that certain treatments cure, or, better still, prevent, certain ills of the flesh, just as two and two make four, not sometimes, but always. I have a friend who is about to undergo a serious opera-

tion at the hands of one of London's most famous surgeons. He is, I suppose, lucky to be able to afford it, but that operation is stigmatized as a fraud in the lectures which another of our most famous surgeons delivers to his pupils. These things in the year 1920 cannot be wholly concealed from the world. The medical student at his hospital is taught certain theories, but, whilst he learns them, he trembles lest they may be anathema to those who anon will examine him. Again, it is notoriously easier to obtain a qualification from one corporation than from another. We are surrounded by medical men who have not even started from the same level. Some begin on the bare minimum of knowledge; some on something more. They are at odds with each other on matters which are life and death to us. They are doing their best, each in his own way, but all of them cannot be infallible. The only honest course is to admit that their science has as yet scarcely passed from its chrysalis stage.

Mr. Bernard Shaw has said that medicine is a conspiracy, but that it is no more a conspiracy than are all the other professions and other businesses. He has understated his case. In politics the differences of parties are loudly

proclaimed, and in religion the clash of creeds is not concealed. Even in letters, no social disabilities are as yet attached to those who own to preference for Miss Sitwell over Mr. Shanks. Unfortunately, there are, practically, no avowed dissenters in medicine. The individual does not openly break away from the crowd, for if he does so, the heresy-hunt will be hot on his heels. Hypnotists who are not humbugs and bone-setters who are not bunglers are known to exist, but it is for their very abilities that they are persecuted by the orthodox. It is the spirit of ca'canny. None must obviously break the uniformity of the ranks, lest others without the gift or skill should be discredited. The general practitioner in Peckham and the specialist in Old Parr Street make a show of using the same methods. Both speak the same language which is Greek to the public, and which in very fact is Greek of sorts. The Old Parr Street man may speak it far more fluently than his cousin of the suburbs, but the two unite against the audacious fellow who would baffle them both with Bantu or Chinese.

No salvation outside the British Medical Association is graven on the backs of thousands of brass plates. Not long ago a woman

with a sick child took it for treatment to a hospital. Also she took it to Lourdes, though this change of air had not been included in the prescription. Strange to say, the child made a complete recovery, and in the devout household there was a talk of a miracle. Between the partisans of divine and human healing there was acrimonious discussion. The doctors said "Mumbo Jumbo"; they also said "Hocus Pocus." What the priest said I have not heard, but, perhaps, it was "Pseudo-Paraplegia," or something which sounds equally abusive. Nobody suggested sharing the honours. Nobody hinted that it was a matter of taste about which there should be no disputing. There was not a pot that did not boil over with calling the kettles black charlatans.

Nothing in the medical conspiracy is more remarkable than the care the higher ranks have for the lower. The specialist frowns on the patient who rings his front-door bell without having previously submitted himself to the doctor, or doctor by courtesy, who earns a living from his cure of bodies in the district where the patient resides. It is as though a candidate for confirmation were found kneeling at the Bishop's feet without a proper introduction from the

parish priest. The lower ranks reciprocate with a care for the higher that is pathetic. The medical student who may have to spend his life in one desperate struggle to make both ends meet in a villa not large enough for one of them, will fulminate against schemes for a State Medical Service which will insure him a living wage, but may tend to make the big-wigs think in terms of the Ford rather than of the Rolls-Royce. If this be not pure altruism, it is altruism syndicated. From top to bottom the profession dreads State Control, but it is bound to come, and it is vain for the medical man to talk of his independence. He is not independent now. He is under the necessity of cultivating the rich lady of middle-age who is safe to be ailing for the next score of years. Just as in the days of Dr. Brand Firmin, there is a path for him to success through courtship of rank and wealth. Once at the top of the tree, he can, of course, be free, but he can never hope to reach those upper branches unless he begins life with an unearned income or a double dose of asceticism in his nature. The newly qualified man is usually human, and, at twenty-seven or so, is, probably, thinking about marriage and a home. That means general practice, mediocrity and pro-

longed care for other people's stomach aches, unless he has money behind him. The necessary years of financially unproductive study which lead to the eminence of Old Parr Street are out of the question for the average young medico. He has to shut out of his vision the idea of ever being able to tell the hypochondriac to go pinch himself or of warning sufferers from the fidgets against wasting his time and their money.

Most of what he has learned he will soon forget in the *traintrain* of cut fingers, obstetrics, and death certificates, but it is to him that most of us have to resort. The rich can afford better advice. The hospitals can deal with but a fraction of the poor, and for the sake of their finances must give preference to those who have letters of recommendation from subscribers. That there should be not one but several grades of medicine for the community is as absurd as though pure water was provided for the Duke of Westminster, whilst unfiltered Thames was considered good enough for me. I know no more glaring example of the truth that we have not as a nation yet begun to understand the A B C of democratic principles than this calm acceptance of inequality in the means of preserving bodies.

The doctor of the future, paid by the State,

will be, amongst other things, a St. George against the dragon of insanitary conditions. His interest will be not merely to keep us alive, but to keep us in such good health that he can spend at least half his days on the links and nearly all his nights in bed. His forerunner, the Medical Officer of Health, is too often the victim of a compromise, and still may have to eke out his living by private practice. Local Authorities have been known to appoint him because he is reputed to have no olfactory nerves, and, consequently, will make no fuss about their drains. Should his sense of smell suddenly develop, he will not have the benefit of their children's next attack of measles. The National Officer of Health must be put beyond such temptations, and then, and not till then, will he be the minister we need. The only other alternative is that the doctor should be in very truth a priest, and a celibate priest at that, under vows of poverty. Of the two evils I do not doubt the profession will choose the least, or that which is the least to them.

My medical friends tell me, by the way, that a doctor on a fixed salary will neglect his patients when no extra guineas or half-crowns are to be drawn from them. They underrate human nature,

including their own share of it. But if some few show themselves unworthy, let them be brought before a Court Medical and expelled with ignominy from the service of their kind for conduct unbecoming to a good citizen and a servant of humanity. "When," as Herrick says, "the learned doctor sees not one hope but in his fees," it is time to leave the invalid to die in the decent privacy of the family circle.

Talking of such matters, I am reminded that the nurses, who really form another branch of the medical profession, have recently formed a trade union. Good luck to them. They have long been shamefully underpaid, but I am afraid they cannot have it both ways. They cannot at once be good trade unionists and ministering angels as well. A woman may tend the sick for a substantial fee and do her work efficiently, or she may tend them for love and do it divinely. The present situation is indefensible. Nurses are ill-paid, and even an abstract love of humanity is not encouraged by their training and by the scolding and bullying they endure in their noviciate. They are tried to prove their worth, but theirs is a trial which does not refine but coarsens. Miss Tennyson Jesse was right when some months ago she wrote that nursing, as at present prac-

tised, brings out all that is worst in woman's character, that worst being a love of authority and of domination ; of driving instead of leading.

The professional nurse dares not be pitiful. If she has to be hard in the operating theatre, equally must she be hard by the bedside ; it is ten to one she will be hard everywhere else, even if she has the luck to marry the house-surgeon. If I could not have one who loved me to be my nurse, I would have a *sœur de charité* who, in place of loving me, loved God and His Mother, and if I could have neither, I would have one of those cheerful looking V.A.D. girls whom I used to see about the camps, for, possibly, she might treat me as a man and a brother. Failing all these, send some male being to look after me, for then, if he were to browbeat me, I could, and would, swear at him, though a *credo* or a *confiteor* were more proper to my station on the edge of life. Only from that professionalism which lies ambushed behind stiff bibs and aprons, which would treat me as a case, whilst itself expecting to be treated as a lady, may I always be delivered.

Nursing was long held to be almost the only profession suited to the average woman. It is almost the only one from which, in existing

circumstances, I would exclude nine women out of ten. Let nurses be paid as well as really good cooks or moderately good ballet dancers, and then will be removed from them the temptation to feel that in smoothing my pillows they are conferring a favour on men and on the human race to which I belong. Finally, let it be realized that none is fit to be a professional nurse save that rare one who with strength of mind and body combines indestructible gentleness of soul.

THE LITERARY CRITICS

RATHER more than a hundred years ago there was published at Oxford a pamphlet entitled *Advice to a Young Reviewer*. Its author, Coplestone, then fellow of Oriel, and afterwards Bishop of Llandaff, was a man of wit and learning, and the plan he followed was that of Defoe in his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. Ironically advocating all the common tricks which critics were, and are, capable of using when, as Dr. Johnson wrote, they stand "Sentinels in the avenue of fame," he reduced them to absurdity. At the end of the pamphlet he showed how, with a little ingenuity and a few facetious touches, a poem by Milton could be made to seem no more than balderdash. Reviewers, young and old, probably took it all as an excellent joke, and forgot it as soon as their serious work began again with the arrival of a new volume.

There are, as he pointed out, a dozen or more easy ways in which a critic can make himself appear clever whilst demonstrating that his victim is a fool. If the author be amusing, he

can be censured for levity ; if he be serious, he can be pilloried for dulness. Should he be modest, he is a nobody ; should he write of himself and his opinions, he is a conceited egoist. If his subject is unknown to you, pillage his preface, and give yourself an air of wisdom by references to the authorities he quotes himself. Above all, do not forget that his work is bound to contain phrases which, if torn from the context, will appear absurd. Finally, to show your good heart, say that he will make a passable success if he will in the future only do this or that for which he obviously has no inclination.

Almost I am tempted to wonder whether Coplestone, like Defoe, may not by some have been taken seriously, and his advice followed to the letter. So unfortunate have been the critics in their struggles with the creators that many are deceived into imagining the former as a tribe of simpletons. Nothing could be further from the truth. Literary criticism has ever attracted men of high talent, well versed in books and affairs. What should be realized is that nine out of ten of them have always represented the party of tradition, or, at least, of things as they are. They are the defenders. Great creative writers, on the other hand, are commonly breakers of

fresh ground and of rules. They are the aggressors, and the world has seldom been prepared for them. Conflict between such forces is inevitable, and so is its result. Only when the world stands still will the conventional critic be right in the end.

Reading carefully the savage criticisms which Blackwood's reviewers once directed at the "Cockney School," one can see they are no mere riot of ink-slinging. The "Prometheus Unbound" was called a "pestiferous mixture of blasphemy, sedition, and sensuality," but this attack, or, rather, counter-attack, was not made by a dolt. The writer was blind to no poetic excellence. He acknowledged magnificence in description, sublimity in eloquence, and "beauties of the highest order." He was, in fact, a reasonably good judge of literary merit, but, being a shrewd man, he saw in Shelley the prophet as well as the poet. When he turned to Keats and Leigh Hunt, he simply wrote of the "drivelling imbecility" of the one, and of the "low birth" of the other. They might be overturning poetic traditions in which he had been reared, but outside bookish circles their influence would be nil. He might loathe, but he did not dread, them. They, he trusted, might be laughed out

of court, but, on the more dangerous Shelley, he thought it worth while to pour the mingled stream of invective and flattery.

Jeffreys, bemoaning in the *Edinburgh* that Moore's verses were an insult to female delicacy, or telling Wordsworth that "this will never do," is an only less significant figure. At a later date, the reviewers in the *Quarterly* are, however, seen yet more clearly to be on the defensive. In 1848 Charlotte Brontë was accused by them of "the highest moral offence a novel writer can commit, that of making an unworthy character interesting in the eyes of the reader." In a poet, perhaps, this would have been no offence. Milton could make Lucifer the hero of an epic, but the novelist, with a presumably wider public, must use more restraint. *Jane Eyre*, moreover, was said to be "pre-eminently an anti-Christian composition," and the reason frankly given is that it contains "murmurings against the comforts of the rich and against the privations of the poor." Surely it must have been the same critic who twelve years afterwards took George Eliot to task for writing "fictions which fill the mind with details of imaginary vice and distress and crime." The use of the word "imaginary" is subtle. The defender of

the England of 1860 asked his readers to believe that vice, distress, and crime were but things imagined.

If a new Cottle should write a pamphlet telling authors how to please critics, he would first instruct them to avoid originality. He would, also, implore them to resemble, at least superficially, somebody, or anybody, with whose works every reviewer is supposed to be familiar. "Give them," he would say, "a chance to show their knowledge of the classics whilst praising you, and praise you they will." Almost the last of our poets to gain wide and rapid recognition from the critical brotherhood was Stephen Phillips. For the sake of his "Paolo and Francesca," Mr. Churton Collins in the *Saturday Review* gave him kinship with Sophocles and Dante. In the *World* Mr. William Archer declared that in "Herod" he heard "the elder Dumas speaking with the voice of Milton." An anonymous contributor to the *Daily Chronicle* found that "Christ in Hades" was a union of Sophoclean simplicity and Lucretian solemnity, with Vergilian result.

It may occasionally be well to astonish the bourgeois, but the English writer who desires a "good press" must spring no surprise on the reviewers. A few years before the Stephen

Phillips boom, Francis Thompson had been guilty of this mistake. I have by me an old number of the *Quarterly* in which he is curtly mentioned in an article on "Minor Poets." His affection for strange words provokes some lines of adverse comment, and he is rated as inferior to Messrs. Kipling and Gilbert, as the equal of Sir Edwin Arnold and Mr. Le Gallienne, and only definitely above the versifiers of the *Referee*. Had he been a Russian, a Scandinavian, or a Hindu, he would have fared better. Novelty, obscurity, even lunacy, may be welcomed in these people. Mere acquaintance with them is a feather in the reviewer's cap. Knowing that he is not expected to understand them, he displays his true feelings of Athanasian reverence for their incomprehensibility, but from his countrymen he demands all the simplicity promised by the advertisers of the hire-purchase system of furnishing.

No doubt it will be claimed that in this "young man's age" a change has come over the critical spirit. Undergraduates have become the guardians of Parnassus, and the amusing prattle of Miss Daisy Ashford commands the attention of a literary world which seems to be slipping into its second childhood. Did this mean that Eng-

lish criticism had suddenly become receptive to new ideas, one could forgive even its most glaring faults, but the truth is far different. Any old idea will do, and complete absence of ideas is by no means unpardonable ; only in the writer's name is novelty demanded. At thirty or thereabouts, one feels old in this land of letters. Already one has seen the bubble reputation pricked so many times ; so many more bubbles are being blown to vanish. Mr. Wells and Mr. Bennett have both been condemned to death as " commercial " novelists, for success with the public is of all things the most odious to the reviewing coterie whose power it destroys. Mr. Galsworthy, too, has fallen from favour. Every *esprit fort* who has composed a battle song in a government office rails at him for maudlin sentiment. Others, whose reputations were only in the making when war began, are simply forgotten. Mr. Conrad, of course, continues to be revered, but Mr. Conrad had the fortune to be born a Pole. Had he been born in Kent or Cumberland, he, too, might have been relegated to the shelf.

One reputable critic has recently assured his readers that " What we like, we really do like." It would scarcely have been possible to own in

print that "What we like, we really don't like," yet of the reality of critics' likes and dislikes I am always a little doubtful. Are the Russians and those others truly beloved? Does Mr. Squire verily desire to tar and to feather Mr. Shaw, or is the editor of the *London Mercury* only celebrating his coming of age by a bonfire of his infancy's tutelary idols? These questions must go unanswered, but the new Coplestone must add one cautionary passage to his "Advice to a Young Author." He must give warning that the warmer a reviewer's praise, the shorter is its duration.

The average length of a reputation in this century seems to be from three to five years. Should you, in critical company, mention anyone who has been writing for a longer period, you are met by an effort at polite attention and by a very bored smile. You and the author you quote are *vieux jeu*. Recently, an American poet has had some of his work published in England, and in several quarters has been rightly acclaimed as a man of high talent, a head and shoulders above most of our own puling bards and nursery rhymers, but his enormous debt to Mr. Chesterton has been barely noticed. Mr. Chesterton belongs to yesterday. He is

mutton to the critics. The old affect to have forgotten him, and the young would have us believe they have never read him.

Is it, I wonder, jealousy? Not conscious, calculating, vulgar jealousy, but just dislike of the thought that any man or woman should gather more than the little bunch of laurels presented by the critics themselves? For the little talents they have their golden rain of adjectives, but of the thing that is big, and may grow bigger, they are afraid. When the first shower of classical comparisons and of hyperbolism is over, the reviewer is as one penitent after a debauch. He returns to his regular business of planing down to mediocrity. "Thus far shall they go, and no further," are, I think, the words he writes on the blotting pad in front of him.

Still he stands a "sentinel in the avenue of fame," but, though he delay a few and plot to let a few more pass, the last word is not with him. Still he practices all the old tricks and irrelevancies. Even in the most reputable of the critical organs I have lately seen a book damned for a fault of the binder, and all, perhaps, because its author was a straight speaking man without respect for the little gods. On the whole, how-

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ever, Mr. Sneer may be a trifle less malevolent than of old, but Mr. Puff is more maleficent than ever. Make no mistake ; Puff is the worst of the twain. More talented writers die of swelled head than of empty stomachs. It is not, alas, every author who knows that "reviews" only matter to him commercially, and are no more relevant to him as a man of letters than are his laundry bills.

REVOLUTION ?

IT is said that Britain has passed through a silent revolution. There has been no storming of the Bastille, no Terror, no Thermidor, but those of us who for the last few years have been abroad on active service are asked to believe that in our absence some Prospero has been at work on our island. Everything has been altered. When the demobilized soldier landed at Folkestone or whatever was his port of disembarkation, he set foot in an unfamiliar country, and, if he had expected to see "earth's increase and foison plenty," he was probably disappointed. For having so set his hopes, he is scarcely to be blamed. A thousand times he had been assured that Britain would always be his debtor, and that when peace came nothing would be too good for him. A civilian again, he looks for signs of a promise faithfully fulfilled. He finds high prices, the housing difficulty, and, in many walks of life, scarcity of employment. Are these things the fruits of revolution ?

As an ex-service man he has, also, his own

special grievances. That the care of the blind should be left to Sir Arthur Pearson and private benevolence, instead of being a first charge on the State, may impress him unfavourably. That " Village Centres " and other places for the training of the disabled should precariously depend on charity, or, if one prefer the word, gratitude, is equally unsatisfactory. In all such matters, of course, tradition has been followed. " Easier to plead from the kindly than to mulct the curmudgeon." So it was after all the old wars, but the Great War was supposed to be different from the rest. Vaguely, fatuously, people say there is " something wrong somewhere " when they hear of a Mons veteran shivering from shell shock in Newington workhouse, and " something," doubtless, will be done for the individual sufferer, but one had expected the revolution to establish a system under which there would be no need for piecemeal beneficence. The appeals for unemployed officers have become an affront to national dignity. The world is moved to hear of honours paid to the dead at the Whitehall Cenotaph ; it ought not to be left to Mr. George Robey, nor yet to Earl Haig, to plead the cause of the living. That, at least, is the view taken by one who has served.

After a few weeks at home the late soldier notes a subtle change in the attitude adopted to his order. A newspaper, after years of blandishment, gravely warns him not to play the hero. He is adjured to remember how much has been done for him, and to be a good boy. Sudden anxiety is evinced for those who have been "carrying on" in England, though a little while ago their services were unduly disparaged, and they were accused, often unjustly, of shirking their duties. Now, there is no tribunal to question their indispensability. They know their business from alpha to omega, whilst he who has just put off khaki has probably forgotten all he ever knew. The wretched character of the old soldier is another British tradition not yet out-lived. Faith in the intrinsic value of military training has not filtered down from the higher minds of Mr. Blatchford and Earl Curzon to the majority of the employing class.

When the native returns, he wonders whether the revolution might not have been postponed until he could have had a hand in it. He charges its authors with sins of omission and commission. Old Prospero, retreating to his easy chair after much vigorous waving of his staff, is also disappointed. "The war," he used to say, "will

do so much good to us all ; particularly to those who are young enough to fight in it." He had talked and written earnestly of the comradeship of the trenches. It was going to solve labour problems more deftly than Lord Askwith and a whole series of round-table conferences. Prospero had conceived the syndicalist "hand" splitting a last biscuit with the cotton thread millionaire, and the cotton thread millionaire vowing to go halves in everything with everybody for evermore. And then, he had thought of the Cockney cad losing his caddishness in admiration for his company commander, and dedicating the rest of a fine life to the service of the officially designated officer class. Whenever he waved his staff, he saw pictures like that. He even thought it no bad thing that those brave fellows should return to an island where they would be given some chance to repeat their deeds of self-sacrifice.

The only comradeship Prospero can now perceive is a cohesion in resentment against himself. Unreasonable demands are made on him. Do these young men realize that the wealth of the nation was blown to blazes a dozen times over on the Somme, Ypres Salient, and Vimy Ridge ? Have they no inkling of political economy to

tell them that all this was unproductive expenditure? Do they not understand that the nations' productive powers are all mortgaged up to the hilt? I sympathize with Prospero in his difficulties, and am aware of the crushing weight of the last straw; also, that one cannot eat one's cake and have it too. Unfortunately, the soldier did not eat the cake; he only consumed the iron rations. The poverty of the land, moreover, is far more real than apparent. Sometimes the soldier suspects that the man who stayed at home has still a slice or two in the cupboard, and the suspicion strengthens his idea of a revolution engineered behind his back.

“War on a scale and for a cause such as this war implies leads to high thinking.” These words, written at the time of the first battle of the Aisne, are quoted from a weekly review of some standing, and they fairly represent the optimism of 1914. Was it naïve or calculated? Most men got through their high thinking as rapidly as the Germans got through Belgium. The prophets had gone on the false assumption that fine deeds beget fine thoughts. Experience has shown that in war some calculate, more miscalculate, but that most, for good enough reasons, do not think at all. There are alternating fits of

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gaiety and brooding, but in neither is the intelligence employed. When it is all over, the mass temperament remains emotional. It may be foolish to talk of revolutions, past, present, or to come, but one cannot escape the word.

Phlegm is no longer a British characteristic. Its requiem was sung by the crowd on the night of the Armistice. The throng which greeted the two airmen who failed to fly the Atlantic, and all but ignored the two others who a while later made a successful crossing, were moved by emotions that not long ago would have been styled mad, hysterical, un-English. An anthropologist hints to me that our little, dark Iberian ancestor is at last conquering the big, blonde men who so long held him in thrall. Years ago, Mr. Balfour wrote that the growth of cities and the emptying of the country could only have the effect of de-Germanizing the people and shifting the balance against the tall, fair element descended from northern immigrants. The end of Teutonism is not to be regretted, but there must be a new policy for a new people. In all classes of society there is a passion for "direct action" and violence. The idea of the political strike synchronises with the prevalence of the *crime passionnel*, and persons of the middle class pre-

fer to settle their disputes before Judge Lynch rather than before him who sits in the Court of Admiralty, Probate, and Divorce. A band of well educated youths, from which the *intelligentsia* of to-morrow is to be recruited, runs amok at a "Pussyfoot" meeting, and is reproved by a Lord Chancellor who himself has a lawless past. The Carpentier-Beckett fight is the focus of attention for three whole days together, and is discussed at Lockhart's and the Ritz with more general knowledge than has been displayed over any other recent crisis in English history. One revolution may have gone unheeded, but the next, if it comes, will not be concluded silently.

Statesmen, presuming we still have statesmen, can take steps to deal with serious causes of disaffection, but what can they do to avoid the dangers which spring from mere levity? Even in art and literature, the vorticist and free-versifier sway and dizzy us. "Empty feather heads growing ever the noisier, in their own emptiness, in each other's noise." Such rattle is an overture with ominous associations. All Carlyle's words in dispraise of the eighteenth-century French fall heavily on the twentieth-century English, and the cynic is already here to point out that all the promised high thinking has led

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only to Saturnalia. Some of us wish that we, like the French, could say our revolution was behind us. The new policy for the new people is not easy to frame. Yet, after all, the idea of the League of Nations was war-begotten, and still survives as revolution's alternative. Hostility or indifference of Senates and Parliaments well nigh choke it, but it is kept alive wherever there is a majority of the generation which has been at war. Until it is made effective there can be no great hope of return to an orderly way of life. It is idle to ask men and women to devote themselves to the serious details of reconstructing civilization before the foundations have been well and truly laid.

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